

**Testimony  
on**

**Security on America's College Campuses**

**Presented by:**

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Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins and Members of the Committee—

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the important and timely issue of emergency preparedness on our college and university campuses. My name is David Ward, and I am president of the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE is the coordinating body for all of higher education and a membership organization representing more than 1,800 two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities. Prior to coming to ACE six years ago, I was Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Let me say at the outset: The security of the students, faculty and staff is a preeminent concern of every college and university president. The events of 9-11 permanently changed the way campuses—as well as the rest of the country—view the issue of security. Four years later, the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina challenged the survival of our institutions in New Orleans and Mississippi as never before. And of course, last week's tragedy at Virginia Tech has put these issues at the forefront of the nation's consciousness once again.

In thinking about this topic, it might be useful to put the issue of emergency planning as it relates to colleges and universities into some context and to identify those factors that make securing our campuses particularly challenging.

Colleges and universities are large places that are open by design. The UW-Madison campus covers over 1,000 acres, enrolls 42,000 students, and employs 16,000 people. On any given day, there can be thousands of visitors attending classes or functions on campus. This mobility is a characteristic that is equally pronounced on campuses with large numbers of commuter students.

College and university campuses are complex places with a great number and variety of facilities—including residence and dining halls, classrooms and offices, power plants and laboratories, field houses and stadiums. At Madison, for example, I was responsible for more than 300 buildings, including a hospital and medical school, a research park, a nuclear reactor, an 80,000-seat football stadium, and a 17,000-seat field house.

Colleges and universities have large numbers of faculty, staff and students. In many places, they are the largest employers in the area. The defining characteristic of a college or university is that it serves a student population that consists predominately of young adults whose attitudes and behaviors differ significantly from workplace employees.

Finally, while New York may boast about being the city that never sleeps, our campuses are truly places that course with activity 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In short, the best way to think of a campus is to view it as a self-contained, small-to medium-sized city—with all the activity, vibrancy and, sadly, vulnerability, associated with cities. With that view in mind, it is appropriate to note that in 2005—the most recent year for which statistics are available—there were 42 violent crimes per 100,000 students on college campuses compared with 2,000 violent crimes per 100,000 people per year in the general population. Furthermore, it is important to note that the violent crimes category as defined by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act") encompasses not only murder and manslaughter, but forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. When you consider only murder and manslaughter, there has been an average of 16 violent crimes per year at the more than 8,000 campuses identified by the Department of Education as submitting Clery Act data. Without question, this is 16 deaths too many, but a small number in comparison to society as a whole.

From my own experience as a chancellor, I can tell you that crises can happen when you least expect them. For example, at Madison I faced the unexpected challenge of dealing with a post-game crowd surge at our football stadium that resulted in 70 students being treated for injuries at our hospital. We used that incident to spur improvements to our communications plan, upgrade stadium facilities, and augment medical and security staff for such events. Without any hesitation, I can tell you that the safety and well-being of students, faculty and staff is a subject that keeps ALL presidents awake at night, whether the campus sits on the San Andreas fault like the University of California at Berkeley, or on a coastal flood plain like Dillard University in New Orleans, or in lower Manhattan like Pace University which, in addition to its main campus, had classrooms in one of the World Trade Center buildings.

While all campuses engage in serious emergency preparedness and contingency planning, there is no question that security efforts were dramatically stepped up on campuses throughout the nation after September 11, 2001. The same kind of increased scrutiny will take place now as well, as each one of our colleges and universities tries to make sense of the unspeakable tragedy at Virginia Tech by sharing the kind of research and information that will be gathered in its wake and using it as grist to help avert future disasters. In this fashion, the University of Florida drew from its own repeated experiences, and that of other institutions, to develop hurricane evacuation models and tools that have been widely adopted by other institutions along the coastal plain. Having such models to draw from and adapt to their own planning efforts is one reason that our Gulf Coast institutions accomplished the smooth evacuation of their students and faculty when Hurricane Katrina struck. In contrast to the extensive death toll caused by the storm throughout the region, the evacuation of the more than 100,000 students and faculty from 30 New Orleans/Gulf Coast institutions was achieved without a single loss of life—it remains one of the unheralded success stories of that horrific disaster.

Even as the tragic events of last week were unfolding, many campuses around the country took immediate steps to place their own institutions on a heightened state of alert. Why? As the campus police chief at the University of Texas said, "A concern for every

law enforcement official in the nation right now is copycats.” We will continue to learn more about what added security measures campuses intend to take to bolster their own planning and prevention efforts, but they have each begun the task of re-examining the needs of their campus. For example, Rice University in Houston is attempting to work with residential college leaders to identify students who appear to be under extreme stress so that they can be referred to counseling. The University of Memphis plans to build a system that will act as a school-wide intercom. The University of Iowa is weighing a similar outdoor system. The College of the Desert in California has a new phone system that allows it to quickly send out announcements to every phone on campus and a backup loudspeaker system when phone contact is not possible. At Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 100 “smart” cameras have been installed on campus that are linked to computers which will alert campus security and Baltimore City Police when suspicious situations arise. At the University of Minnesota, 101 of the university’s 270 buildings have electronic access devices linked to a control center that can selectively lock and unlock doors, send emergency e-mail and phone messages, and trigger audio tones. These are just a few of the examples of the steps colleges are taking to upgrade their security to prepare for the unthinkable and the unforeseen.

A critical element of emergency planning and preparation is allocating sufficient resources to upgrade the equipment and tools that will promote and enhance security. As I have already noted, technology increasingly plays an important role in protecting the campus community—but it can be expensive to purchase and it is never foolproof. Ultimately, how effectively campuses respond to crises depends on the people who are responsible for executing the prevention or containment plan and how well they are prepared to handle the situation. In this regard, colleges have come a long way since 9-11 in advancing the sophistication and expertise of their law enforcement and first-responder personnel. Grant money from the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS) has provided invaluable support for incident training efforts, creating opportunities for incident intervention trials, and making this kind of training widely available.

The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) is the professional association and accrediting agency which has been instrumental in developing best practices, training materials, and guidance for the campus community in matters of security. We support their recommendation to take the next logical step toward strengthening campus first-responder capabilities by creating a National Center for Campus Public Safety as recommended by a 2004 DOJ summit. The function of the Center would be to promote collaboration among national and local law enforcement agencies, and strengthen the administrative and operational components of campus security systems.

In the end, it all comes down to planning. It is essential that every campus have an emergency plan in place that identifies a core response team, a communications plan, and a way to implement the movements of emergency and other staff in a variety of scenarios. It is also vital that such plans are routinely reviewed and upgraded. Hurricane Katrina taught us that the communication elements of such plans are key and that

campuses must have backup plans and technologies in place to handle the loss of major campus facilities. All emergency plans must consider not only the campus community but the surrounding area and region, and staff must drill frequently to find vulnerabilities and refine capabilities.

There also is a useful role for ACE and other presidential associations to play in the identification and dissemination of best practices to our members. For several years, ACE has hosted sessions at our annual meeting that feature presidents using their own experiences as case studies in crisis management. While information is widely shared among the crisis management team on campus, and among specialists such as campus law enforcement officers and mental health professionals, we have found that when opportunities for give-and-take are afforded them, presidents learn a great deal from each other about critical aspects of emergency planning that may not have occurred to them.

No one wants to consider the unthinkable, but in our post 9-11 world all of us must consider it and plan for it—this includes college and university presidents. We have already made great strides to upgrade campus security and ensure that our world class institutions remain safe places to live, learn and innovate. But we cannot rest on our laurels, as the events at Virginia Tech have shown, there is always some new and tragic episode or circumstance around the corner.

Thank you.