**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security**
**and Governmental Affairs**
**"Security on America's College Campuses"**

**Remarks by: W. Roger Webb**
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Last Friday while walking across our campus, I met a tour of high

school students, many with parents, who were visiting our university as they

make decisions about next fall.  The tour guide asked if anyone had any

questions for the President, one mother quickly asked, "Will Amanda be safe

on your campus?"

All across America parents are asking this same question.  Parents

want to know, and have a right to know, how safe are our universities?

I'd like to talk with you about three sets of tension on today's campus:

- The tension of an open campus versus a secure campus

- The tension of individual privacy versus community safety

- The tension of expensive systems and training versus limited
  resources

I entered academia after twelve years in law enforcement, the last four

serving as Commissioner of Public Safety for Oklahoma.  This perhaps

makes me one of the few college presidents who carried a badge and a gun in a previous life. Hopefully, the experiences of living in both worlds has provided me some insight that might be helpful to my colleagues in higher education as we wrestle with the complex issues involving campus security.

College administrators today face competing priorities rarely found outside an educational environment. Not the least among these priorities is providing a secure environment for a community disposed toward freedom: freedom of thought, of speech, of access and of movement.

Most college and university populations live with a sense of invincibility. The academic mindset often assumes there exists some sort of moral protective barrier surrounding our campus and that serious crime is something that happens outside our walls and quadrangles.

For years those of us in the Heartland naively thought that we were immune to mass violence and acts of terrorism. In 1986, Patrick Sherrill calmly walked into the Edmond, Oklahoma, post office and murdered fourteen people. That post office is located two blocks from our campus. Then, twelve years ago our erroneous assumptions were again shattered when Timothy McVeigh ignited a Ryder truck loaded with fertilizer and race

car fuel and brought down the Oklahoma City Federal Building, destroying the lives of 168 men, women and children with a blast that was heard and felt on our campus. We had not planned for a parked truck becoming a weapon of mass destruction. Neither had law enforcement planned for hijacked airplanes flying into buildings becoming instruments of death, nor a one-room Amish school house becoming a killing zone.

Certainly 9/11 should have been a wake up call to the potential of mass violence on our university campuses, but in reality, not much has happened to change the level of campus security at most universities. And then just one week ago, our world was turned upside down once again when a young man, in the agonies of his hatred, became a weapon of mass destruction and with semi-automatic handguns, wiped out the lives of more than thirty people, living, working, studying on a campus of a great university in Virginia.

So today the spotlight is shining squarely on every college president and every senior campus administrator in this country.

Because of my earlier career, I am keenly aware of the tension that exists on virtually every campus between the security mindset and the

academic desire for an open environment.  Such tensions require careful judgments because both sides have valid concerns.

In light of the realities of 1995 in Oklahoma City, 1999 in Columbine, 2001 in Washington D.C. and New York City, and just a week ago today in Blacksburg, campus administrators must review and revise their security procedures, their technology and communication measures, their budget commitments and perhaps most importantly, their training and awareness programs – not only for security personnel, but for all staff, faculty and students.

College and university campuses are also encountering another challenge.  There has been a significant rise in the percentage of students coming to us who already have mental illnesses.  Laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act prevent discrimination due to a disability, including mental illness.

Universities have to weigh the rights of individuals against the safety concerns of the community.  Balancing the rights of individual students while protecting the university body at large is a particularly complex task.

Because of this challenge, we must have in place professional counselors to assist with our troubled or disturbed students. Every case involving a troubled student is different. Moreover, all university personnel should be trained to recognize and report signs of troubling behavior. In these instances, the hope is that the disturbed student will agree to be treated in a hospital setting. But when a student refuses to admit himself voluntarily, the threshold necessary to remove the student from that university community is set very high. This is the gray area.

I am certainly no expert in this field but I believe in situations where the safety of our university community is involved and the individual will not allow counseling or treatment, we must look for ways to eliminate this behavior. Our goal must always be to discipline the disruptive behaviors, not disparage the person.

Universities typically have codes of conduct that define parameters of acceptable behavior for the community. When behaviors approach the limits of these parameters, the university is compelled to respond. Counselors, campus police and student housing and conduct officers must be able to cite such disturbing behaviors in order to demand that the student obtain

effective treatment, withdraw from the university, or no longer be permitted on campus.

All these efforts must currently be attempted in a legal and policy context which places severe limits on sharing of information regarding such matters. Moreover, the ability to intervene in a situation of potential, rather than actual danger, is severely limited, as well. It may be that the lines are currently drawn in ways that prevent prudent and appropriate responses. Certainly such issues should again become the focus of public debate.

For example, at the University of Central Oklahoma, we are now dealing with a former student who is continuing to make threats to our faculty, and yet we are prevented by federal law from notifying other institutions of his potentially dangerous behavior.

For a campus to get out in front of an actual threat, threat assessments are necessary in order to determine possible risks to critical support facilities, critical research infrastructure, communication systems, cyber systems, and most importantly, the people. Protection of people and spaces such as, residence halls, classrooms and common areas are vital to every campus.

Needed today on most college campuses is training in threat assessments and in analyzing a threat in order to provide proper response and intervention. This training should be comprehensive and include the campus administration, decision makers, counselors and school psychologists, security and law enforcement leaders, risk managers, and communication specialists. Maintaining a safe campus requires a holistic approach that brings all relevant personnel and tools together in a coordinated and balanced effort. While every school is unique, essential elements of an effective security program are the same. For this reason every campus should have a thorough understanding of Critical Incident Management and the various roles from decision makers to security personnel. A Critical Incident Management Plan is a must for every campus and one that should be rehearsed regularly.

According to Mary Ellen O'Toole of the F.B.I. Academy, in her document, *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime*, "A school cannot ignore any threat of violence. A clear, consistent, rational, and well-structured system for dealing with threats is vitally important in a school. If students or staff feel

that threats are not addressed quickly and sensibly, or if school

administrators appear overwhelmed and uncertain at every threat, confidence

in the school's ability to maintain a safe environment will be seriously

undermined.  An effective threat management system will include a

standardized method for evaluating threats, and consistent policies for

responding to them."

I am urging today that we as a nation, and particularly our nation's

campuses, become aware of security materials that already exist and take

advantage of training opportunities that prepare us to handle the unexpected

event and, hopefully, prevent it from occurring in the first place through

training, education and preventive assessments.

We must also be able to respond to emergencies with contemporary

technologies.

In addition to standard, proven alert systems such as alarms, flashing

alarm systems and voice activated warning systems, universities need to

know how students on their campuses like to communicate.  By using all

available methods, including the social networking sites such as Facebook

and MySpace, etc., as well as third-party mass communications systems

such as voice mail and text messaging, we improve our odds of reaching our students on campus in the event of an emergency.

For commuter students and others who have not yet arrived on campus for the day, enlisting the help of the local media, radio and television, as well as using our campus website, calling trees, and e-mail, would, again, help us reach our campus community quickly and efficiently. A complete array of communications modalities is vital.

The federal government should make broader availability of the materials, resources and programs that already exist. For example, although InfraGard is designed to share intelligence and information between academic institutions, state and local law enforcement agencies, public utilities and the federal participants, it is doubtful that many academic institutions are familiar with this and other valuable resources. Campuses across this nation should be encouraged to become members and take advantage of such opportunities.

In the aftermath of the Columbine shootings, federal dollars were distributed as grants to many agencies and institutions for training materials that should be in the hands of college campuses today. These materials and

training aids should be easily accessible and readily available so that all campuses can take advantage of the tremendous effort already produced from past tragic events. Web sites such as those maintained by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (M.I.P.T.), www.mipt.org, provide invaluable service as a clearing house for information and training. I would strongly recommend that M.I.P.T. be supported by the Office of Homeland Security to provide a new link involving campus security.

States are already reviewing their campus security practices in the wake of last week's tragedy. Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry has formed a task force to re-evaluate safety and security at our colleges and universities. Also, on May 30, a National Summit on Campus Security will be held on the University of Central Oklahoma campus, jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), M.I.P.T. and the University of Central Oklahoma.

There are other resources that Universities can look to.

- The University of West Florida – President John Cavanaugh and the University of West Florida, can offer an excellent management template for dealing with major disasters after their experiences with at least four hurricanes that have rocked their campus in recent years.

- California State University – California State University at Northridge, will share lessons learned from their experiences following an earthquake a few years ago.

- Sonoma State University – Policy statement on a violence-free campus.

- Disaster Resistant University – FEMA – a planning process for mitigation and responsiveness to any crisis. This outstanding program has been closed and is worthy of renewal.

- Homeland Security – Sentinel Project – sponsors high-quality security and safety training.

- I.A.C.P. – International Association of Chiefs of Police has available training aids for all levels of law enforcement.

- I.A.C.L.E.A. – International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators – Coordinate and provide emergency response training (federal grant) and provide resources/support to campus law enforcement nationally and internationally.

- The F.B.I. National Academy is reaching out to the campus community by making available more training slots for campus police officers.