

# **THE ROLES AND STRATEGIES OF CAMPUS SAFETY TEAMS FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS COMMUNITIES**

**Findings from a Critical Issues Forum of  
Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Law Enforcement Executives and Administrators**

**Sponsored by the  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY**

**October 2018**



**THE ROLES AND STRATEGIES OF CAMPUS SAFETY TEAMS FOR  
PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS COMMUNITIES**

**A report for the  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY**

**October 2018**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 17, 2018, a group of campus safety leaders and subject-matter experts, with support from the National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS), gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a one-day forum. The purpose of the forum was to discuss campus safety's role and strategies for preventing violence in college and university campus communities. It also provided potential solutions and recommendations for addressing challenges associated with preventing violence. The forum aligns with the NCCPS's role as a nationwide resource for addressing critical issues in campus safety.

Twenty-two (22) campus safety leaders came from 20 institutions of higher education (IHEs) across the country and included university and college chiefs of police, as well as campus safety administrators.

## Strategic Challenges Identified

The forum participants identified four areas in which campus safety departments face special strategic challenges in their efforts to prevent violence in their campus communities.

### 1. Weak partnerships on and off campus

- Siloed cultures and resistance to security measures are stifling communication and cooperation.
- Ambivalence or internal conflict among campus leadership is hindering progress and weakening morale.
- Many IHEs don't have reliable, written agreements with key partners.

### 2. Insufficient training

- Wide gaps in knowledge and skills exist regarding safety requirements, especially between local police and campus safety teams.
- Training budgets are low.
- Interest levels and expectations around training are inconsistent among campus safety teams, other staff and faculty, and campus leaders.

### 3. Low funding

- Administrative buy-in on the importance of funding safety initiatives is low or inconsistent.
- Campus safety teams are scrambling for money to train, hire well, and collect and share safety information that could help prevent violence.

### 4. Continuity of operations (COOP) planning and after-action reporting efforts are inconsistent

- Weak procedural structure is making processes more cumbersome.

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#### Heard in the forum:

*"You would think that after Harvey came, they would do it.... We discovered people just didn't know how to do it. We provided a template and they still haven't done it... Another hurricane will come."*

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- Low budgets, low involvement, and/or low encouragement from IHE administrators is also fueling ambivalence about COOP planning and after-action reporting.

## **The Search for Answers**

The forum participants discussed a broad array of factors, tactics, and strategies for addressing the challenges they identified. Their discussion did not evaluate specific efforts or policies at particular IHEs, nor did it evaluate individual campus safety programs. However, a series of core principles emerged regarding strategic efforts.

### **1. Campus safety teams must do more to...**

- Formalize and strengthen their partnerships with organizations that play key roles in preventing violence.
- Ensure their people are well-trained and know how, when, and why to communicate information, resource needs, or other data to other IHE teams, law enforcement, or community groups.

### **2. IHE leaders must do more to...**

- Reinforce the importance of training, continuity planning, and after-action reporting.
- Give campus safety a seat at the leadership table.

### **3. IHEs as a whole must do more to ensure their campus safety teams are...**

- Trusted, equal partners.
- Seen as teams of people worthy of investment.

Established in 2013, the NCCPS is a clearinghouse for information, research, training, promising practices, and emerging issues in campus public safety. The NCCPS's mission is to provide useful resources and information to support safer campus communities. To this end, the NCCPS works to connect campus public safety officers, professional association members, advocates, community leaders, and others to improve and expand services to those who are charged with providing a safe environment for the nation's campus communities.

# BACKGROUND

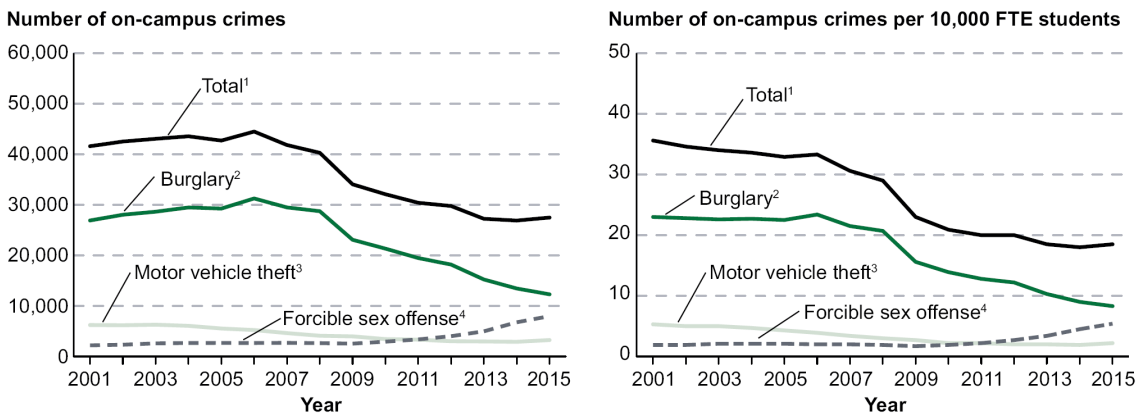
## How Can Campus Safety Teams Prevent Violence Strategically in Campus Communities?

College campuses have generally become safer places over the last 15 years, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), but for some types of violent crimes, the numbers have risen in recent years.

Between 2001 and 2015, the overall number of reported crimes on college and university campuses fell by 34%, but in 2014 and 2015 — the most recent data in the NCES report — crime reports rose 2% from 26,900 to 27,500.<sup>1</sup>

For some types of crime, the rise has been sharper. The number of reported forcible sex offenses on college campuses increased by 18% between 2014 and 2015, for example, and the number of reported murders was higher in 2015 than in 2001. Some of the rise may be due to changes in reporting requirements and other factors.<sup>2</sup> A chart from the National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences “Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2017” report highlight some of these trends.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 22.1. Number of on-campus crimes reported and number per 10,000 full-time-equivalent (FTE) students in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by selected type of crime: 2001 through 2015**



<sup>1</sup> Includes other reported crimes not separately shown.  
<sup>2</sup> Unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft.  
<sup>3</sup> Theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.  
<sup>4</sup> Any sexual act directed against another person forcibly and/or against that person's will.  
 NOTE: Data are for degree-granting institutions, which are institutions that grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some institutions that report Clery Act data—specifically, non-degree-granting institutions and institutions outside of the 50 states and the District of Columbia—are excluded from this figure. Crimes include incidents involving students, staff, and on-campus guests. Excludes off-campus crimes even if they involve college students or staff. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Campus Safety and Security Reporting System, 2001 through 2015; and National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2002 through Spring 2016, Fall Enrollment component.

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences, “Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2017.” March 2018. Accessed September 4, 2018. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences, “Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2017.” March 2018. Accessed September 4, 2018. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences, “Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2017.” March 2018. Accessed September 4, 2018. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf>

Additionally, although most campus crimes were not violent (45% of all criminal incidents were burglaries and 12% were motor vehicle thefts, for example), 29% of on-campus crimes were forcible sex offenses. There were also 860 reported hate crimes on college campuses in 2015, some of which involved assault, intimidation, robbery, or forcible sex offenses. The NCES estimates that college campuses experience 1.5 aggravated assaults, 5.4 forcible sex offenses, and 0.7 robberies per 10,000 full-time-equivalent students in a year.<sup>4</sup>

The actual amount of violence occurring on college and university campuses may be much higher, however. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, in 2016 only about half (51%) of serious violent crimes, including rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, were reported to police. Just 42% of all violent crimes were reported to police.<sup>5</sup>

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime includes four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. The UCR program defines violent crimes as offenses that involve force or threat of force.<sup>6</sup>

In campus communities, a multitude of circumstances can raise the threat of violence. Some potential threats are common; others, such as protests and demonstrations, mental health crises, domestic or workplace disputes, or even crowded venues, may be more complex in campus communities. This prompted the following question:

*“How can campus safety teams prevent violence in university and college communities?”*

Accordingly, on July 17, 2018, a group of campus safety leaders, with support from the National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS), gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina, to discuss the challenges campus safety departments face and uncover promising practices for addressing them. Key questions during the event, which occurred during the Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Law Enforcement Executives and Administrators 19th annual training conference, included:

- What can campus safety departments do to prevent violence among their students, faculty, and staff?
- How can campus safety departments balance their IHEs' safety needs with the goals and needs of the surrounding communities?
- Are there ways campus safety teams can optimize their violence prevention resources?

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<sup>4</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences, “Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2017.” March 2018. Accessed September 4, 2018. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, “Criminal Victimization, 2016.” Accessed September 4, 2018. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv16.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/violent-crime>

The questions sparked a critical discussion, and participants noted several factors that make violence prevention efforts at IHEs unique.

**IHEs do not operate in a vacuum**

Colleges and universities are in many ways self-contained entities, but when it comes to safety, they are very much part of a wider community. IHEs must work with local law enforcement as well as federal regulators, state agencies, community groups, staff and faculty organizations, neighborhood associations, business groups, and other entities that affect the direction, cost, and impact of campus safety efforts.

**IHEs have special reporting and investigation requirements**

Colleges and universities are subject to state and federal regulations that affect how they mitigate, respond to, and recover from violence on or near their campuses. Accordingly, the skill, training, and procedural needs among campus safety teams can differ considerably from those of local law enforcement agencies.

**IHE budgets are limited**

Funding is a perennial challenge for many IHEs, and those challenges frequently trickle down to campus safety departments. In addition, many IHEs fail to prioritize campus safety during the budgeting process.

**IHEs must keep serving their communities**

Colleges and universities must remain open and accessible to the community to fulfill their missions. This requires thoughtful planning and preparations to ensure continuity of operations after violent events, and it requires meaningful after-action reporting that shares knowledge and improves resilience. Campus safety teams must maintain these efforts despite the pressures of threat management, training and skill development, and funding.



## INTRODUCTION

The forum was facilitated by Andrea Young of the National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS). Young guided attendees through a hands-on process of breakout group discussions and exercises. Throughout the day, participants followed the agenda below, raising critical issues and developing practical solutions to address them:

- Identify campus safety's roles and current violence prevention strategies
- Discuss current efficacy
- Identify gaps and challenges to effective violence prevention strategies
- Brainstorm solutions that may address these challenges
- Prioritize solutions
- Develop recommendations

The sections that follow contain key takeaways and conclusions. They constitute the principal findings of this report.

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**Forum purpose:**

*To discuss campus safety's role and strategies for preventing violence in college and university campus communities.*

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## DISCUSSION

### What Is Campus Safety's Role in Preventing Violence in Campus Communities?

Campus safety leaders have a lot to think about as they work to formulate strategies that help prevent violence on and off their campuses. Questions like these are common:

- How can we encourage campus leaders, local law enforcement, and other safety leaders to treat the campus safety team as a trusted, equal partner?
- Is there a way to make sure campus safety teams know what to do if and when violence occurs?
- How can we provide training, information sharing, and other operational needs with limited resources?
- What can we do to overcome reluctance or ambivalence among some campus community members when it comes to planning for continuity of operations and writing after-action reports?

Forum participants had these questions and more. In general, their strategic concerns fall into four categories:

1. Partnerships on and off campus
2. Training
3. Funding
4. Continuity of operations planning and after-action reporting

Working through each area with an experienced facilitator, forum participants identified specific strategic challenges in each category and evaluated potential solutions that may help campus safety teams prevent violence on and around their campuses. This section summarizes their discussion.

#### Strategic Challenges in Partnerships on and off Campus

Successful campus safety operations work cooperatively and efficiently with local law enforcement, community organizations, student groups, faculty associations, and other campus constituents. That cooperation and efficiency can sometimes be difficult to achieve.

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**Heard in the forum:**

*"They see security and policing differently than we do. They think that whatever they see on TV; that's the way it is."*

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Forum participants noted a pervasive "us-versus-them" culture in many IHEs whereby faculty, staff, students, and other community members often resist campus security efforts or exclude campus safety teams from decision-making processes and important communications.

In many cases, the most resistant members of the campus community are the ones who lead the IHE, according to forum participants. For many IHEs, the consequence is a lack of understanding, support, communication, and effective leadership among critical teams, which in turn makes violence prevention efforts less effective and more expensive. In some cases, weak partnerships also create

confusion when campus safety teams and local law enforcement are unsure of each other's responsibilities when violence occurs.

## Training Challenges

Some of the largest obstacles IHEs face in their violence prevention efforts revolve around training. Colleges and universities must adhere to a variety of unique reporting and investigation requirements mandated by the Clery Act and other laws intended for IHEs; they must also abide by state laws, grant policies, and other requirements. This creates special training needs for campus safety teams.

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### Heard in the forum:

*“Everybody is doing their own thing and then when something happens, nobody knows what to do.”*

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However, campus safety teams often face uphill battles when it comes to ensuring their employees get that training. Some IHEs are battling a lack of interest among leaders or staff in doing training; others often find that the third-party security vendors they rely on aren't trained properly.

## Funding Challenges

Most IHEs will say they could use more funding for a variety of things, and campus safety teams are no different. But when it comes to efforts to prevent violence, forum participants said they are often hamstrung by tight or shrinking budgets that cut training and don't provide adequate resources for collecting or sharing data and information with other agencies.

The consequence for many IHEs are undertrained campus safety teams, less access to information that could prevent or mitigate violence in the campus community, and less efficient management and response to violence. Forum participants said low funding also hinders talent acquisition and retention, and it limits preventive programming and outreach efforts.

Forum participants also reported that campus administrators are often not fully aligned with the vision, role, or purpose of the campus safety department, which further fuels underinvestment. This lack of administration buy-in is a serious challenge for ensuring campus safety teams have the resources they need to be effective.

## Planning Challenges

Forum participants said many IHE campus safety teams struggle to get faculty members and campus leaders on board with preparing continuity of operations plans and after-action reports.

Participants said some campus safety teams provide templates or one-on-one training to department leaders but frequently don't receive completed plans in return; others

report resistance or skepticism among faculty, staff, students, or community members about the necessity of the effort. Weak standard operating procedures are often a factor.

Forum participants also said that when campus safety teams are able to persuade IHEs to participate in continuity planning and after-action reporting, the completed plans and reports are often not distributed to the correct parties or aren't distributed at all. The consequence is thin or nonexistent continuity of operations plans and after-action reports, leaving IHEs less prepared for violence, less effective in their response and recovery when it occurs, and with fewer learnings that could improve safety in the future.

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**Heard in the forum:**

*“Sometimes the reports aren’t distributed. Maybe they just don’t want to do it. In some cases we send out templates, and our [emergency manager] has explained how those templates need to be filled out. In some cases we provided one-on-one training. They just don’t do it.”*

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## POTENTIAL STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

The forum participants developed several potential solutions that can significantly help IHEs address the strategic challenges they face regarding preventing violence in their campus communities.

### Possible Solutions for Improving Partnerships on and off Campus

- **Prioritize and dedicate time to communications** – Cooperation requires communication. Campus safety teams can build trust and engagement with local law enforcement, staff and faculty, and students by consciously building transparency and open dialog into their missions and everyday activities.
- **Formalize partnerships** – More IHEs must document their agreements with and expectations of local law enforcement and other agencies so that all teams understand their responsibilities in violence prevention and know what to do when violence occurs.
- **Set aside time for cultivating alliances and joining forces** – IHEs can help prevent violence on their campuses by forming more alliances at dedicated offsites tailored to staff, faculty, and student groups that are interested in preventing violence in the campus community. This raises the campus safety team's profile and creates personal relationships that nurture buy-in.

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#### Heard in the forum:

*“Sometimes when you change an environment, people are more apt to give you access.”*

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### Possible Solutions for Improving Training

- **Reinforce a culture of mandatory training** – Training is not useful if nobody receives it. IHEs can help prevent violence by ensuring their campus safety teams are properly trained and that the IHE, through its scheduling, compensation, and promotion policies, is reinforcing the importance of receiving that training.
- **Leverage existing resources to lower the cost of training** – IHEs often have space, technology, or other assets that can entice other agencies to provide training for free or reduced cost on campus, thereby making the training goals more achievable.
- **Develop a strategic plan for fulfilling training needs** – Forum participants said that documented, evidence-based, measurable training plans increase the likelihood of obtaining and maintaining funding.
- **Be a competitive employer** – Hiring good campus safety officers and administrators is an important task for every IHE. Ensuring that campus safety professionals are paid competitively and feel “heard” are key, forum participants said.

## Possible Solutions for Coping with Funding Shortages

- **Leverage other departments' budgets** – Campus security teams can stretch their dollars by meticulously and strategically allocating or sharing costs with other departments that are budgeting for or relying on the same resources.
- **Hone grant expertise** – Campus safety departments may be able to bolster their budgets if they have one or more people trained in grant-writing, allowing campus safety teams to get more involved in obtaining their own funding.
- **Sell the department's needs** – Many IHEs leave potential funding on the table because they don't provide compelling arguments for needing the money, focus group participants noted. Campus safety department leaders must be well-versed on every line item in their budgets, be able to document the department's needs, demonstrate evidence of adequate spending controls, and show how the department compares to competing institutions in terms of resources and spending.

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### Heard in the forum:

*"It's our responsibility to tell people what we need and how much it's going to cost, and be relentless about those needs."*

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## Possible Solutions for Enhancing Continuity of Operations and After-Action Report Efforts

- **Make it easier** – Forum participants noted that campus community members often know they should be preparing continuity of operations plans and after-action reports, but don't always know how to do the work. IHEs that provide templates, written instructions, or training tend to see more participation and completion.
- **Persuade campus leaders to require planning and reporting** – Campus safety teams can boost readiness and learnings if they have the backing of campus leadership and exist in a culture that expects staff and faculty to participate in continuity of operations planning and the compilation of after-action reports.
- **Indoctrinate new employees about expectations** – Presentations to new faculty and staff members regarding the role of campus safety can boost knowledge about the department's goals, role, and expectations when it comes to continuity of operations and after-action reporting. That can in turn boost an IHE's readiness and response to violence. This can be particularly effective in orientations for managerial and leadership positions.
- **Have a plan B** – Continuity of operations plans aren't perfect, and IHEs should be sure to create thorough plans by including alternative options and backup resources.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants defined a number of promising strategic practices that campus safety teams can implement to prevent violence in their IHE communities.

## Recommendations for Improving Partnerships on and off Campus

- 1. Develop a comprehensive written policy** that clearly defines campus safety's standards and expectations around communication, including:
  - **Keeping the administration informed of all policing activities** in order to build trust, raise the department's visibility, and provide an ongoing, evidence-based education about campus safety. This includes the board of trustees.
  - **Ensuring the campus police chief is a member of the president's cabinet** in order to streamline information flows to the top and reinforce the importance of campus security.
  - **Holding regular meetings** with local law enforcement agencies, housing managers, student safety groups, business owners, fusion centers, state and federal task forces, and campus social media managers.
  - **Taking leadership on state-level safety issues.** When state legislatures propose or approve security-related measures that affect the IHE, the campus safety team should be involved; this helps build credibility, raises profiles, and opens lines of communication about efforts to prevent violence.
- 2. Establish memorandums of understanding (MOUs)** with local law enforcement, other IHEs, and other agencies that can and should assist the IHE before, during, or after violence occurs. This helps ensure more efficient, reliable, and cost-effective response activities.
- 3. Conduct an offsite meeting or retreat** for administrators, faculty, and student groups that are interested in improving campus safety, and use the event to do hands-on exercises, as well as discuss what the campus safety team needs to be effective. These events can also force administrators to focus on campus safety if the topic is built into the agenda of team retreats.

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### Heard in the forum:

*"When we started showing up, people were like, 'OK, this is a new day.' You'd be surprised how much traction you can gain just being visible in a meeting like that."*

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## Recommendations for Improving Training

- 1. Establish minimum training standards and expectations** for all campus safety employees, and mandate the successful completion of that training.
  - Ensure supervisory and managerial job descriptions include a requirement to provide training as well as obtain it.
  - Introduce incentives to complete training (or disincentives for skipping training).
  - Adjust work schedules to incorporate training, and capitalize on campus downtimes or slow periods when scheduling training.

- Identify training and skills gaps emerging from differences in the rules and procedures the IHE must follow versus the rules and procedures local law enforcement must follow.
2. **Capitalize on existing assets** to lower the cost of training.
    - **Help an officer obtain trainer-level certifications** so the department can bring subsequent training in-house.
    - **Ask larger departments** to provide or open the doors to training that campus safety officers can also attend.
    - **Offer to host trainings in campus facilities** in return for free seats.
    - **Scour online resources** for more convenient, less expensive, technology-based trainings that can boost participation, save or eliminate travel time, and lower costs.
    - **Pair new officers with experienced officers** to provide more on-the-job instruction.
    - **Develop or add to MOUs** with external agencies such as local police, sheriff, or security companies to ensure patrols and other duties do not suffer when training is taking place.
  3. **Develop a three- to five-year strategic plan** that details training needs by category and their cost, including research regarding federal requirements or other situations that justify the training.
  4. **Listen.** IHEs with productive hiring and training programs are careful to listen to and incorporate feedback from outgoing campus safety employees. Forum participants said this feedback can quickly highlight what's effective and ineffective within the department.

## **Recommendations for Coping with Funding Shortages**

1. **Identify other departments or cost centers** in the IHE that share, determine, or rely on campus safety assets, and allocate costs to those departments/cost centers where feasible (e.g., placing vehicles in the parking department's budget or tech needs in the IHE's IT budget), thereby freeing up campus safety budget dollars without sacrificing needed assets.
2. **Partner with local businesses.** IHEs can generate funding for campus safety by forming partnerships with local businesses interested in providing scholarships or developing their brands in the campus community.
3. **Offer classes or training** to any campus safety employees who want to learn how to write grants.
4. **Invest time in building financial checks and balances** among campus safety leaders in order to provide a consistent, compelling message about what the department needs, why it needs it, and how it will responsibly spend it.



## Recommendations for Enhancing Continuity of Operations Planning and After-Action Report Efforts

1. **Provide templates** for continuity of operations plans and after-action reports to departments to encourage completion.
  - **Train staff** to help others with planning and report completion.
2. **Pursue a presidential/board mandate** requiring departments and other entities to write or participate in continuity of operations plans and after-action reports. The mandates should include deadlines.
  - **Detail the consequences to IHE leaders** of not having continuity of operations plans, including risks around not being able to provide instruction or support basic business functions.
  - **Hire a temporary or part-time employee** to visit departments, drive participation in planning and report compilation, and help enter data.
  - **Use the plans and reports to identify capacity gaps**, and use MOUs and other tools to close those gaps, thereby ensuring that the IHE will have what it needs to mitigate, respond to, and recover from violence.
  - **Involve all stakeholders in realistic exercises** that test the plans.
3. **Incorporate an overview of the campus safety team into new employee orientation.** At a minimum, the information should cover campus safety's role, responsibilities, challenges, and expectations from employees.
4. **Prompt planners to identify alternative options and backup resources** in their continuity of operations planning.
  - **Plan participants should demonstrate awareness** of their roles, responsibilities, and key functions, as well as who will serve in their stead if they cannot serve.
  - **All stakeholders** should be aware of the plan and receive a copy of it.

## APPENDIX: PARTICIPANTS

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- **Jacques Battiste**, Xavier University
- **Gloria Blaire**, Alert Security
- **Derrick Boyd**, Norfolk State University
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