

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY SUMMIT – OCTOBER 28, 2015

This Summit was a great opportunity for community colleges, private institutions and Regents schools to come together for discussions centered on safety and security. It was the first statewide campus summit and not likely to be the last.

The Summit was sponsored by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees, the Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post High School Education, and Des Moines Area Community College. Attendees ranged from staff, students, faculty, Iowa Department of Homeland Security, members of the Board of Regents, to campus law enforcement and upper administration.

The sessions that used power points or handouts were all going to be made available on the Board of Regents website. But as of Wednesday afternoon, I haven't been able to find them yet.

Keynote Speaker

Bonnie Campbell, former Attorney General of Iowa, was the Keynote Speaker. She was instrumental in strengthening Iowa's domestic violence laws and increasing funding for victim compensation programs and shelters. She also wrote what became a model statute on anti-stalking for states around the country. She joined the Clinton Administration in 1995 as head of the Justice Department's newly created Office on Violence Against Women. In 2007, she was appointed to the Board of Regents by Governor Culver. She frequently advises colleges and universities on Title IX and related campus safety issues. She stressed the importance of safety and security on campus by saying that "we must acknowledge that our campus is not as safe as we think." There is still more to do. Her speech seemed to focus more on sexual assault. Some highlights from her talk include:

1. One in five women are sexually assaulted. That's 20 percent. With an additional 6% of male students being sexually assaulted. If 26% contracted Ebola it would be an epidemic. (That really starts to put things into perspective; looking at it from that aspect.)
2. When a victim reports, it must be investigated. If the alleged conduct creates a hostile environment, it must be corrected and resolved within 60 days (plus any remedial steps in the meantime). Every reasonable effort must be made to accommodate.
3. The campus climate – understanding what this is. There is a disconnect among faculty, staff and students. Each see climate differently.
4. Ms. Campbell feels that there are three main challenges:
 - a. Questioning the judicatory process carefully. The criminal justice system determines if a crime has been committed. But schools have sanctions. Should there be expulsion or mandatory counseling?
 - b. Consent on absolute claim of defense. "She wanted it." It's the essence of the matter.
 - c. Beyond a shadow of a doubt. The criminal justice system must prove it but in a 'he said/she said' scenario it becomes challenging.
5. We must commit to shift cultural norms. We devoted more education and applied higher costs/consequences to smoking, drunk driving and wearing seat belts. The norms changed in those cases.

Sessions

Attendees had the ability to select different tracks to attend. Because someone else registered for me, I was placed in the following three sessions:

1. Mandatory Reporters and Confidential Advocates
2. Judicial Process and Investigation
3. Coordinated Campus and Community Response

Mandatory Reporters and Confidential Advocates

Facilitators of this session shared their challenges and successes in identifying mandatory reporters and confidential advocates, providing training to those individuals and informing the campus community about these resources.

If someone is a mandatory reporter, they must indicate such if someone starts to share information. It becomes challenging because you don't want to discourage the discussion but a potential victim must know that if talking to a mandatory reporter, whatever they share will not be confidential per say. It will be reported.

Judicial Process and Investigation

Well-crafted policies and procedures provide protections for both the students and the parties involved as well as the institution itself. With an increasing number of laws, regulations and guidance documents governing how an institution responds to sexual misconduct, how can we be sure our procedures are both legally sound and practically appropriate?

The attorney who spoke talked about a situation where a student was accused of sexual misconduct. This student was in 9th grade. The accusers were in 8th and 9th grade. Kids are playing "The Nervous Game". It's a game where you touch someone until they are offended but this case it went too far. The reality of this situation is that this individual will end up in one of our schools.

As Bonnie Campbell mentioned a secondary school has 60 days to take corrective actions but a K-12 school has 10 days.

Policies should be easily accessible. 1 Mouse click!

He discussed what Office of Civil Rights (OCR) wants to see in a policy. Hopefully the list will be made available on BoR website soon. I did take further notes so contact me if you're interested.

Coordinated Campus and Community Response

Facilitators discussed how some colleges and universities are partnering with community victim service providers to effectively respond to incidents of sexual violence.

Did you know there is a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) located on the Iowa State campus?

SART consists of specially trained professionals from multiple agencies who work together to provide a community coordinated response to reports of sexual assault. The Story County SART mission is to serve sexual assault victims by coordinating an immediate, high quality, multi-disciplinary, victim-centered response which may include health care, law enforcement, advocacy, and judicial systems. Story County SART services began in 1997 and are provided 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."

There are many cultural challenges and language barriers when it comes to supporting victims and providing education. When someone goes through a trauma, it's not thought of in their non-native language. Translating definitions is difficult.

My take-aways.

Discussions revolved mostly around sexual assault. There are so many other aspects of safety and security than sexual misconduct and some of those topics were covered by other sessions that I didn't attend. But it was their first summit and certainly the topics discussed were very valuable. It also mostly focused around students as opposed to relations between student/faculty or staff/faculty.

Other sessions that I did not attend included Bystander Training, Cyber Crimes and Police Investigation, Student Engagement, Campus Climate Survey Development and Use, Prevention through Student Led Initiatives, and Identifying Hazards on Campus & Emergency Response Protocols. I'd be interested in reviewing any handouts or power points used as those would have been good sessions as well. I'll be watching the BoR website and if you would like any other information about this summit I would be happy to share my other notes.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend!

Kris Koerner

Shared during the November 5, 2015 P&S Council Meeting