Wednesday, March 20, 2013
Workshop Session 2

Time of Session: 11:00-12:00PM
Session Title: Defining Safety for Universities: The Slippery Conceptual
Slope
Speaker: **Pam Jenkins**, The University of New Orleans
Room: 256
Head Count: 16
Note Taker: Sabrina Freeman

- Build a climate of resilience through mitigation in the social realm
- Planners usually do not cover building such a climate. Where do we start?
- Professors usually ask themselves if they are going to have a problem this semester. They tend to think of problem students as problems instead of people about to go off a cliff.
- Campus safety—learning and knowledge occur in a supportive environment
- Contradictions in campus life
  - Employs a variety of people
  - Different goals
  - People view knowledge differently
- Campus life in the 21st Century
  - Diverse
  - What passes for knowledge is different
  - Location—not your father's ivory tower
- What we are about is rapidly changing. How we deal with emergencies is also changing.
- Creating a climate of safety:
  - Students perform better when they think they are safer
  - Students have a commitment to the school
  - Unsafe climate has a negative impact on faculty, students, and staff
- Currently, there is a negative school climate, like people are running to get out
- There is not a link between mental health and violence. A troubled person is exposed to stress/trauma and then the event occurs.
- Thousands of students with mental health problems come to your school, usually without event or notice
- Troubled students—hopeless, disruptive, and don't often seek help
- How do we best fit these people—help them fit—into this institution?
- Crime on campus—most is nonviolent, property crime. Campuses are usually pretty safe, although women are somewhat less safe on campus than men
- School shooters, like the one at Virginia Tech—experience everyday strain, acute stressful or traumatic event, plan, then event occurs
- Alcohol and students—alcohol causes more deaths and injury than anything else on campus
- Most emergency managers present at this session have plans for massacres, but not for other events, alcohol, or mental health
- Huge focus on massacres. Emergency managers tend to focus on those who are already "in the river" vs. those who have not yet fallen.
- Pam Jenkins puts everyone into groups for an exercise. We are all given the following scenarios to consider:
  - SCENARIO I
    A young woman is enrolled in a small undergraduate class. She speaks to every point made by anyone else in class. She portrays herself as the expert, equal or superior to the instructor offering an opinion about everyone's work. The faculty knows about her from another source (not from inside the academy). The faculty knows when

challenged she (the student) reacts by acting out in increasingly unorthodox, yet nonviolent ways, such as interrupting, disappearing, and increasingly inappropriate comments.

The faculty intentionally chooses to 'put up with it.' He does not challenge when the student comments throughout the semester. Without comment, the faculty waits out the student's comments and goes on. During the course of the class, there is some gossip that the student may be suicidal; the faculty reports this to the department chair. The faculty knows going into class each day that he will have to tolerate this student until the semester is over.

We are given the following questions to consider:

1. How serious is this situation?
2. What are the consequences of the faculty's choice for the student? The faculty? And the other students?
3. What other strategies could the faculty have used in this situation?
4. Who in the university could have helped the faculty and student? And how?

o The following opinions are offered for Scenario I Question 1:
   o The university probably needs to take action.
   o Compliance issues—Privacy laws. Report up the chain. Address issues.
      ▪ Jenkins—it's gossip, meaning it went up the gossip chain. Compliance with privacy laws is a problem.
   o Check what is going on in classes and see how serious the problem is
   o It is serious. Disruption is serious and requires intervention from mental health, etc. You have to check out rumors of suicide. Refer to health services
   o Climate has changed in the classroom. Faculty always remembers students they have to mitigate.
   o Not that serious as a threat.
   o May be serious. Not enough info. Stable behavior, but the professor has to consider the business; other students are customers.
o The following opinions are offered for Questions 2 and 3:
   o Probably no consequences unless it is a legitimate problem. Determining if the problem is legitimate is difficult and doesn't usually happens until an act of violence, etc. tells you it's a problem.
   o Talk out challenges.
   o This is every student—entitled generation

- - We 'kick the can down the road' to the next person's plate
- The following opinions are offered for Question 4:
  - Depends on the class
  - Behavioral intervention team
  - Oregon does not have this, but does have mechanisms for reporting students, faculty, and staff of concern
- Arizona incident—staff/faculty "kicked the can down the road"
- College emergency manager tells story of a troubled student who thought her apartment was bugged because of a blinking alarm she found in her water filter. Emergency manager alerted campus police and avoided the student. He has "no idea what happened with the case."

- SCENARIO II
  A young man, a student, works out every day at the gym. Each day at the gym, he yells and screams as he goes through the workout at each machine. His voice is heard throughout the gym. The rest of the students, faculty, and staff are visibly uncomfortable. He stops and greets everyone he encounters throughout the gym. He stands too close and engages in long conversations with people he does not know. Throughout the gym, people make small gestures to avoid him—not making eye contact or moving out of his path. It has been months and to others who use the gym, it appears his behavior has not changed.

  We are given the following questions to consider:

    1. What should happen to this student?
    2. How could the university staff let the other people at the gym know that they are aware of the problem?
    3. How does the staff create a safe atmosphere in this context?

- In response to the questions, attendees offered the following opinions:
  - The scenario could have a bad ending, and faculty could have stopped it before it became a major problem
  - People mull, instead of taking action
    - 'not such a big deal'
    - 'I don't have to deal with this'

- Bureaucracy is a problem and professors don't want to ask for help
- We do not know each other, and interpret things differently
- Learn and create knowledge
- Assessment—Safety audit, interviews, focus groups to identify social structure, elements of campus safety. Consider all issues—not just violence
- We can develop ways to audit for social safety climate

- Build resilience for safety by focusing on stakeholders--faculty, staff, students
    - Shared efforts to understand diversity
    - Visible leadership
    - Coordination