

IMMINENT THREAT TASK FORCE SUMMARY

Process Statement for Imminent Threat and Behavioral Recommendation

With the number and frequency of incidents in which people have been harmed at educational institutions because of the harmful and violent acts of others, involving students, staff, faculty, and community members, the East Georgia State College campus and community cannot think of itself as immune.

The Imminent Threat Task Force (ITTF), formed on an *ad hoc* basis in August of 2012, was charged to act primarily as a referral body and bridge between the various college groups, committees, offices, procedures, bodies, and teams that deal with student behavior on and off campus. This Task Force was charged with determining the role of various bodies, including the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), the Judicial Committee, the Conflict and Grievance Committees, Human Resources, Public Safety, and Counseling Services.

The ITTF (ITTF) was asked to make recommendations to the president of the college about what actions should be taken if an imminent threat is identified, how and to whom one would report such a threat, and how an identified threat should be monitored. The Task Force was also charged with determining which person or bodies will conduct a “threat assessment” and what actions will be taken to monitor a threat once it has been identified.

The ITTF met extensively during the fall 2012 semester and consulted with a variety of stakeholders. Members of the task force participated in three webinars dealing with Managing Student Threats and Risk, on the topics of Balancing Campus Safety and Legal Liabilities, Threat Assessment and Behavioral Intervention, and Student Conduct Systems.

A full list of the ITTF’s responses to specific questions that it was asked to consider is available later in this report, but the following is intended as a summary of processes that are being recommended with consideration of their effect on current committee structures and systems in place to deal with Imminent Threat and Behavioral Intervention.

Summary of Recommendations:

- All “imminent threats” identified by students, faculty, staff, and community members should be reported directly to Public Safety. A clear mechanism should be in place, a readily available place on the college website and a phone number, where anyone can swiftly bring imminent threats to the attention of Public Safety.
- Public Safety officers are the best resources on campus to assess imminent threats. In cases where threats are considered to be truly imminent (i.e. any member of the college community is in danger of harming him or herself or others), then Public Safety should report that threat immediately to the Emergency Response Team (ERT).
- Threats that are deemed to be not “imminent” should be referred to a body known as the Behavioral Recommendation Team (BRT), which should replace the current Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT).
- The BRT should have scheduled monthly meetings which include briefings from the Student Conduct Officer (SCO) and make recommendations regarding concerns dealing with behavioral issues on campus.
- The BRT should take reports from all stakeholders (students, faculty, staff and community members) through a clear reporting system that is available through the college website.
- The purpose of the BRT is to recommend and monitor actions that have been or will be taken dealing with non-imminent behavioral issues related to the campus community. The BRT may recommend specific cases to Public Safety, Counseling Services, the SCO, the Student Housing Office or any other body that will serve to improve the outcome of a behavioral issue. In rare cases, where a previously unidentified imminent threat is identified, the BRT may make a recommendation to the ERT.

Task Force Responses to Questions presented by the President

1. ID Processes, other than BIT, now available to address serious day to day mental health and conflict issues of our students, faculty and staff.

Several resources are available to faculty, staff and students, as noted below.

For Mental Health issues, the following services exist: GA Crisis and Access Line (students), EGSC Counseling Services (for students, faculty and staff emergency/ limited basis), Health Clinic (students only), Human Resources (faculty and staff) all will receive a first report and then refer to an outside professional. No flowchart currently exists for the routing/ handling of a mental health issue. A report of a person in crisis on campus could arise from a number of sources, and would most likely be referred to Counseling, Human Resources and Public Safety.

For Conflicts, EGSC Counseling, Human Resources, Conflict Resolution (if both parties agree to the process), Director of Housing (students only), Student Conduct Officer(students only), Employee Grievance(employees, including student employees), Public Safety. Current policies encourage faculty, staff and students to resolve conflicts with immediate and second level supervisors, and if not resolved, move to conflict resolution if both parties agree to mediate, and allow for an employee grievance procedure. This policy framework was recently adopted and is not widely known by college campus.

2. Identify the mechanisms now in place to make campus community aware of process in #1:
Information about the Behavioral Intervention Team and Conflict Resolution is shared at the Fall Workshop with faculty and staff. Students receive information on the processes through the Student Success Class, Housing staff, Counselor and Counseling webpage, flyers and Student Handbook. Faculty and Staff also receive information through the Human Resource website, Faculty Handbook and Staff Handbook.
3. Identify any mechanisms in place to encourage or require members of college community to **report** situations (identified in #1 or independently) when those situations present a threat of imminent harm.
All of the above mechanisms listed in response to #2 above exist to inform and encourage faculty and staff to report incidences. In addition, the EGSC Emergency Response Procedures flipchart provides a reporting outline for violent behavior.
4. Identify any mechanisms in place to pool our human resources to address the situations that present threat of imminent harm.
There is currently no mechanism that calls for the pooling of resources to respond to an imminent threat. However, the Emergency Response Committee and Behavioral Intervention team are both pooled resources (multidisciplinary teams) that can be combined to create an effective response to imminent threat. Public Safety, Counseling, Student Conduct and Housing frequently work together on student behavior matters. This group (and others if needed) could be identified in the Connect Ed emergency notification system as a response group notified when student imminent harm matters arise, and also for non-urgent student matters.
5. Review 2-3 other institutions imminent threat response.
6. Does EGSC have an adequate mechanism in place to address imminent threat of harm situations? No
If not, what is needed? What do we need to do to get better prepared? Recommend a policy framework.

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- (a) **All incidents of imminent threat should be reported to Public Safety.**
- (b) **Segregate the duties of the Emergency Response Committee and Behavioral Intervention Team:**
Emergency Response Committee: this is a facility and operations based coordinated response of multiple units of the college to a natural disaster or other emergency. The committee's goal is continuity of college operations during the disaster and immediately afterward. A "violent behavior" response is provided. The new Emergency Response Procedures flipchart will include a "Disruptive Classroom Behavior" tab outlining emergency and non-emergency behaviors and a flowchart of recommended responses/decision tree. The flipchart should be distributed to all employees and be permanently located in every classroom and all other rooms on campus. (This will be accomplished with the Jan- February 2013 distribution of the revised flipchart).
Behavioral Intervention Team: Initially the BIT was formed to intervene in the lives of students in non-emergency mental health crisis. The BIT is now a multidisciplinary team responding to non-emergency complaints from instructors about a student's classroom behavior. The Imminent Threat Task Force's recommendation is to narrow the focus of BIT to non-emergency mental health crisis / early review and intervention for students of concern. The name should be changed to the "Behavioral Recommendation Team". The new role of BRT will be to review cases and develop an action plan. This includes identification of existing areas of communication and support for student, and understanding how the student interacts with campus and community. The recommendations for action and effective response will be made through referrals to various on and off campus services. The Chair of the BRT will follow up on all recommendations and keep the committee informed of progress. The BRT will meet monthly and will intersect with SCO as needed for follow up of selected cases. (See attached Chart)
- (c) **Implement classroom management training for instructors.** The committee recommends that Lin Inlow, Director of Consortium on Conflict Negotiation and Resolution, conduct "Train the Trainer" classroom management sessions for an EGSC faculty mentor group. Faculty mentors would be identified by Division Chairs, agree to attend the training and provide on-going guidance and support to faculty on the management of classroom disruption.
- (d) **Classroom management complaints** could not come to BRT unless mentor and instructor have tried several management methods and student is believed to be unwilling to abide by classroom rules and is in crisis. BIT can refer to Student Conduct Officer. If the student is not in crisis, then the complaint goes directly to Student Conduct Officer.
- (e) **Create Educational Materials/Chart/Decision Tree** for all employees. This guide should clearly state the appropriate process to follow for person in a mental health crisis, rude or non-compliant person, and person posing imminent threat. Distribute the guide to all employees. Distribute the guide to instructors during the classroom management training sessions; make available on Counseling and College website. (University of Maryland, Virginia Tech, GA Southern) BRT guidelines and referral form should be created and placed on college Counseling webpage or as standalone BRT webpage.
- (f) **Create Policy on Involuntary Withdrawal and Review Policy on readmission after medical withdrawal or suspension for mental health crisis.** Review policy and procedure for students that involuntarily withdraw or are granted medical withdrawal due to mental health crisis. Currently, Counseling and Vice President for Academic Affairs work together on some cases, and others go through VPAA. Consider centralization of student withdrawal files /management in Counseling office to ensure student follows through

with treatment before he/she is readmitted. Consider whether BRT should be involved and if any follow up required once student returns, and if so, by whom.

- (g) **Review Policy on record retention of BRT committee files.** Adopt a procedure for retention and storage.
- (h) **Publicize and distribute policies on conflict mechanisms available to students and employees (conflict resolution and employee grievance).**

Behavioral Recommendation Team Process Chart

