

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

**Statement
of
David Rainer
Associate Vice Chancellor
Environmental Health and Public Safety
NC State University**

**Before the
Homeland Security Committee
United States House of Representatives
May 17, 2007
Washington, D.C.**

Introduction

On behalf of North Carolina State University and Chancellor James Oblinger, I thank you for inviting me to testify about how to strengthen federal efforts to enhance community preparedness and response as it relates to schools, and in particular, to universities. I hope our experiences at NC State can help to shed light on what is at risk, what we do to prepare for a disaster and how we respond to a crisis that affects our campus and our community.

As associate vice chancellor for Environmental Health and Public Safety at North Carolina State University, I am responsible for coordinating the campus preparedness and response efforts for disasters and emergencies within our campus and coordinating with emergency response agencies throughout the wider community in which we live and work. I also work with other units on our campus to develop crisis response and communications plans as well as plan and carry out simulations of possible disaster scenarios that could occur on our campus and in our community.

We are fortunate that our university is one of the few that has under one division the Campus Police, Environmental Health and Fire Safety. This enhances our ability to train as one team, develop efficient emergency response protocols, develop a trust and understanding of how each discipline responds and assure that all response protocols recognize and support each of our primary campus emergency response groups.

Our Campus and Community

NC State is a large campus, with more than 30,000 students and about 7,000 employees, including approximately 1,800 full and part-time faculty and extension field faculty. Including visitors, there could be 40,000 people or more on campus at any given time. Not only do we have large numbers of people on campus, but our campus population is spread over 2,110 acres on three separate tracts of land that make up the main campus in Raleigh. In addition, we have more than 101,000 acres in research and extension farms, forests and facilities throughout the state. As a land-grant university, we have staff and facilities or field offices in all 100 counties in the state of North Carolina and the Cherokee Reservation. NC State was awarded more than \$146 million in federally funded research and \$207 million in total research awards in Fiscal Year 2006.

More than 8,000 students live on campus; our approximately 16 million square footage of building space includes student residence halls, research labs, classrooms, private company and government administrative offices, dining halls, recreation commons, athletic facilities, steam and cooling water generation facilities and pilot-scale manufacturing facilities. We operate our own Wolfline bus system and transport over 13,000 passengers a day.

NC State's Raleigh campus is located within the city of Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. Raleigh is a vibrant and growing city with more than 350,000 residents. NC State University's campus is less than 3 miles from downtown Raleigh and the population density on campus is far higher than the city in general.

NC State Response to Emergency Preparedness

We take our job of protecting campus people and assets very seriously. We believe the State of North Carolina and the Federal Government have placed a certain trust in us as a flagship public university as well as investing significant tax dollars in our campus. We are good stewards of both.

NC State takes several approaches to campus safety and emergency preparedness, starting with a well-trained police department, one of the few accredited university police departments in the country. Accreditation means our police have met or exceeded nationally recognized standards for law enforcement agencies. The university's police department – which includes 55 sworn law enforcement officers -- provides a full range of services, including 24-hour patrol (by vehicle, on bikes, on foot and on horseback), investigations, a 911 center and a crime prevention unit. The department offers a wide range of educational services.

We have written mutual aid agreements with other police agencies including the City of Raleigh and Wake County Sheriff Department. We have mutual aid agreements with other governmental agencies to use campus facilities as shelters or mass medical surge facilities in case of weather or other declared emergencies.

We have university-wide crisis response and communication plans on which departmental plans are based. By creating a plan before a crisis erupts, we believe we have accelerated our decision-making process, an important advantage in an emergency.

The Environmental Health and Public Safety division, as part of our ongoing commitment to emergency preparedness, regularly conducts all types of emergency drills. These drills keep our emergency responders ready for different situations and help us evaluate our ability to handle problems beyond the scope of daily happenings in our university community.

- By simulating a crisis and engaging the leadership in a decision-making discussion, we improve our ability to respond to a real emergency. To make drills realistic, senior leadership participate. Participation prepares them to take a leadership role in an actual emergency and furthers their understanding of how assets are deployed and an incident command system works.
- We understand that because of the size of our campus, we may not expect to see community resources in case of natural disaster until up to 48 hours or longer after a major emergency. Campus drills allow us to test our ability to support the 8,000-plus students who reside on campus and who would remain our responsibility in a major event if students could not travel home.
- Campus Police are the first responders to any campus police emergency and we test their preparedness to all types of police emergencies.
- Environmental Health staff are first responders to campus radiation safety and chemical emergencies. They serve as technical specialists should regional HAZMAT teams respond to campus. We test our technical ability to respond as well as ability to advise and communicate with outside partners and regulatory agencies.

- Campus Fire Protection staff are all Emergency Medical Technician certified and are first to respond to emergency medical events. We have tested our ability to respond to unique campus medical emergencies that may involve radioactive material and chemical agents.

Our drills often include municipal response groups. We are proud of our working relationship with Raleigh Fire, Hazmat, EMS and Police; and Wake County Emergency and the State Office of Emergency Management. In turn, community emergency drills often include NC State responders and sometimes use NC State facilities (football stadium, high-rise residence halls, underground utility tunnels) to realistically test the ability to respond to complicated emergency situations.

Over the past four years, we conducted or participated in the following drills:

- Infectious disease outbreak (smallpox, pandemic flu with the Wake County Health Department)
- Radioactive material release (“dirty bomb”) with Raleigh Hazmat, Raleigh Police Bomb Squad
- Terrorist chemical attack with Raleigh Hazmat, Wake and State Emergency Management, federal agencies, police agencies
- Terrorist attack with hostages at an athletics facility with local, state and federal police agencies
- Active shooter on campus with multiple police agencies
- Urban search and rescue, with Raleigh Hazmat and Fire Department
- Train derailment with state, local and federal agencies

What We Have Learned

All drills are designed to test our ability to respond promptly to a crisis, communicate effectively with drill participants and our community at large, and to take appropriate action to stabilize, mitigate and resolve the problem. Each type of drill presents different and unique challenges that require temporary work-around actions and implementation of corrective action plans during and after the drill. Among other things, we have learned that:

- Universities must prepare for catastrophe through planning and funding. Universities that are self sufficient, provide support to the larger community in a disaster through personnel, expertise and shelter. Of course, universities not prepared become another entity of potentially thousands of people in need of rescue.
- Pre-planning is critical. Universities must clarify in advance with surrounding city and county agencies their expectations of use of university facilities for shelter, such as coliseums and convention facilities. These expectations may conflict with university plans or require extensive university support.
- Universities must work in partnership with local and state agencies and must consider entering into its own contracts and agreements with vendors for continuity and support.

- We must continue revision and improvement of existing plans in accordance with changes in internal capabilities and roles and responsibilities. We must also account for changes in capabilities of supporting groups and agencies.
- Departments require cross training in functional roles and need to understand the capabilities and limits of responding groups.
- Internal and external communication protocols and capabilities must be tested and retested. Emergency mass communication is a challenge and communication systems fail when stressed (cell phones, web servers, text message systems). When our communication systems have failed we have had to improvise.
- During our radiological drills, we have learned that emergency responders need better personal monitoring equipment and training and need to understand some of the technical aspects of our radiological license.
- During chemical emergency response, the university has had to provide specific monitoring instrumentation to outside responders.
- Recovery and reconstitution plans must be in place, continuously updated and tested.
- Understanding the limits of our ability to respond to various scenarios and the shortcomings of key systems such as communication pathways is critical. By practicing various emergency scenarios, we begin to gain an understanding of the way the campus population may respond to instructions and what systems may fail.
- We have developed mechanisms to regularly share equipment and information with outside responders, recognizing that a university campus response is often not the same as a general community emergency response because of the density of the population and sometimes-unique hazards.
- We have learned that no crisis proceeds according to plan.

What More Can the Department Homeland Security (DHS) Do to Help Improve Campus Safety

I am aware that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has reached out to support state and local governments and universities through various initiatives, including the Disaster Resistant Universities Initiative. In our own experiences – and in our conversations with our colleagues from around the country – we believe that university campuses are so large, complex and unique that special support is required.

My recommendations include:

- Establish one National Resource Center that supports the provision of emergency planning and campus security information to universities and ensures that universities are aware and familiar with available resources. This Center could help introduce a greater focus on the unique security needs of college campuses.
- DHS could create a “best practice” symposium on campus safety and security. The last national symposium was called by Oak Ridge Associated Universities in 2003. Universities are struggling to identify “best practices” for a wide range of security and communications issues.

- Pulling the first two points together, the Center could research, develop and train best practices in interdisciplinary and all hazard disasters and guide universities in implementing effective programs.
- DHS has made great strides in encouraging the public to develop family and personal emergency plans. We believe university campuses also have an obligation to support emergency plan development. DHS could create materials targeted to college students such as “*Ready Kids*” for children and utilize campuses to communicate more information to families about personal emergency planning.
- Help establish well-formulated and tested standardized threat assessment protocols for university campuses modeled after guidelines of the *Safe School Initiative* for public schools developed by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Secret Service.
- In support of the above point, evaluate how constraints regarding sharing of information mandated by the Federal Family Educations Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Probability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) impact on a university’s ability to share and receive information that may be relevant to identifying threatening individuals.
- Help coordinate and develop standardized campus security and hardening protocols. Current requirements specified by Select Agent rules, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, DHS’s *Interim Final Rule: Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards* need to be coordinated so universities implement standardized hardening and security protocols that support the requirements of a multitude of regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to discuss this important issue of campus safety. Your willingness to engage in an open dialogue and seek input from colleges and universities will help and continue to improve our ability to respond to campus emergencies. It is also hoped that this hearing and future initiatives will better prepare our campuses to prevent future tragedies.