



GENERAL REPORT

October 2, 2026

Office of the Commissioner of Higher
Education

USHE Campus Safety Task Force Report

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Executive Summary

The Utah Board of Higher Education [voted](#) on October 2, 2025, to direct the Commissioner’s office to establish a task force to evaluate campus safety across Utah’s public colleges and universities. The task force was instructed to recommend systemwide policies and practices to enhance the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff. This report is the culmination of those efforts.

Task Force Membership

The Board and Commissioner’s office worked to identify an interdisciplinary and cross-sector team of professionals to serve on the task force. Multiple Utah System of Higher Education institutions were represented on the task force, and membership included experts from a variety of institutional operations related to campus safety and emergency response, including public safety, emergency management, behavioral threat assessment and management, communications, student affairs, and general counsels. The Commissioner’s office also partnered with state, municipal, and private leaders to bring perspectives, collaboration, and subject matter expertise from outside the higher education context, which helped ensure the discussions and resulting recommendations were more robust, well-rounded, and innovative. This extensive and thoughtful representation was critical for contemplating and addressing the complexities that make higher education’s safety landscape nuanced and often challenging, such as:

- The large and decentralized nature of campuses;
- A large workforce with complex organizational structures;
- Asynchronous course schedules;
- Extended hours of campus operations;
- Accessibility to the public, including large events and, in the case of the University of Utah, a healthcare system.

The Commissioner’s office expresses gratitude to the following individuals who generously supplied their time, knowledge, and resources to this important work, with a special thanks to University of Utah Chief Safety Officer Keith Squires for helping to lead the task force, and to former State Risk Management Director Rachel Terry for co-leading work group discussions:

USHE CAMPUS SAFETY TASK FORCE MEMBERS		
Group/Perspective	Name	Role/Title
HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS		
Utah Board of Higher Education, Commissioner’s office	Jon Cox	Board Vice Chair
	Geoffrey Landward	Commissioner

	Katie Mazzie (staffing)	Associate Commissioner of Government and Trustee Relations
	Hilary Renshaw (staffing)	Associate General Counsel
Campus Safety and Emergency Management	Keith Squires	Chief Safety Officer, University of Utah
	Wes LiCalzi	Chief of Police, Utah Tech University
	Jason Huntsman	Associate Director of Campus Security, University of Utah
	Stuart Moffatt	Emergency Management Director, University of Utah
	Keith Livingston	Associate Director of Threat Assessment and Management, University of Utah
Institutional Presidents	Mindy Benson	President, Southern Utah University
	Tyler Call (as designee for President Jim Taggart)	Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, Ogden-Weber Technical College
Communications	Amanda DeRito	Associate Vice President of Strategic Communication, Utah State University
Legal	Anastasia Morgan	General Counsel, Salt Lake Community College
	Clark Collings	General Counsel, Utah Valley University
Student Affairs	Jessica Oyler	Chief of Staff, Utah State University; Former Vice President for Student Success and Access, Weber State University
EXTERNAL PARTNERS		
Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Events and Venue Security	Matt Pennington	State Security Chief, Utah Department of Public Safety
	Brian Redd; Bill Manzanares	Chief, Salt Lake City Police Department (<i>Deputy SLCPD Chief Manzanares participated as Chief Redd's designee when needed</i>)

	Blake Paris	Senior Vice President of Public Safety, Guest Experience and Executive Protection, Smith Entertainment Group
	Randy Watt	Extensive military and law enforcement experience, cofounder of SRW, Inc., assists regularly in consulting on campus security
Communications	Chris Thomas	President, Intrepid (USHE-contracted crisis communications management consultant)
Risk Management	Rachel Terry	Former Director, State Risk Management USHE Chief of Staff (beginning August 2026)

Task Force Workflow and Methodology

The Campus Safety Task Force (task force) began its work in late 2025 and early 2026 with three plenary discussions. These discussions focused on the landscape of preparation and response for the multiple types of emergencies campuses could face, from human-caused disasters such as active aggressors, civil disturbances, cybersecurity threats, and utility failures, to natural disasters such as earthquakes or extreme weather events.¹

These broad conversations revealed trends and yielded insights that informed the second phase of the task force; in February and March 2026, the task force divided into two working groups, one focused on pre-emergency preparation and prevention efforts, and one focused on response strategies during and after emergencies. Each working group met to develop specific draft recommendations in their respective areas of focus.

The task force then resumed its plenary work beginning in April 2026 to review the proposed recommendations and develop templates and resources to help USHE institutions implement the task force's recommendations. During summer and early fall 2026, the Commissioner's office worked to draft and refine this report with Campus Safety Task Force members and other key stakeholders.

¹ Emergency types modified from the [University of Utah Public Safety Framework](#)

Task Force Recommendations

The task force provided the following recommendations and associated key actions for the Board's consideration:

PROTECTION, PREVENTION, AND PREPAREDNESS²

Recommendations	Key Actions
AREA 1: BEHAVIORAL THREAT INTERVENTION AND MANAGEMENT	
Recommendation 1: Foster a culture of vigilance across USHE institutions.	Key Action 1.1: Each USHE institution launches a strategic campuswide communications plan that helps students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus identify threatening behaviors and understand how to report them.
	Key Action 1.2: USHE institutions integrate behavioral threat education into existing trainings for students, faculty, and staff to help individuals recognize threatening behavior, know how to report it, and understand the importance of reporting.
Recommendation 2: Adopt a “funnel” approach for reporting and responding to threatening behavior.	Key Action 2.1: USHE institutions offer the campus community multiple modalities for reporting threatening behavior.
	Key Action 2.2: USHE institutions ensure that all reports of threatening behavior are sent to the appropriate interdisciplinary response team to support timely assessment and response.
	Key Action 2.3: USHE institutions ensure multiple individuals are monitoring reports of threatening behavior at any given time for redundancy.
Recommendation 3: Establish shared service partnerships between USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges to support scalable behavioral threat intervention.	Key Action 3.1: Using USHE's Title IX shared services approach as a model, USHE institutions execute regional memorandums of understanding to facilitate degree-granting institutions providing behavioral threat intervention support to their respective technical college partners.
AREA 2: SAFETY OF EVENTS, FACILITIES, AND OPERATIONS	
Recommendation 4: Develop consistent standards and protocols for requesting and planning campus events.	Key Action 4.1: USHE institutions require that campus events are requested through and formally approved by the institution before the event takes place. Institutions that offer multiple modalities for requesting or scheduling campus events ensure event requests aggregate to a central point so that campus police are aware of events and the appropriate interdisciplinary committees (see Key Action 5.1) can review campus event requests.
	Key Action 4.2: USHE institutions adopt policies that have a standard requirement for how far in advance a campus event must be requested. USHE institutions submit their policies to the Commissioner's office for reference.
	Key Action 4.3: USHE institutions adopt policies that require consistent information fields on campus event requests. USHE

² Spectrum modified from the [University of Utah Public Safety Framework](#) Pillars

	institutions provide a copy of their policies to the Commissioner's office for reference.
Recommendation 5: Standardize protocols for assessing and managing risk related to campus events and daily campus operations and activities.	Key Action 5.1: USHE institutions create one or more interdisciplinary committees to review campus event requests.
	Key Action 5.2: When an interdisciplinary event review committee identifies that an event is high-profile, features a prominent speaker, has the likelihood to garner significant attendance or public attention, or involves elevated security concerns, the committee notifies relevant institutional administrative and campus safety leaders; the institution then conducts a security and risk assessment and creates and executes a written event action plan using a scalable approach that matches the event's risk profile, attendance, venue, security considerations, and operational complexity.
	Key Action 5.3: USHE institutions, in collaboration with the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office, define and maintain consistent standards for security and police staffing ratios based on campus operational needs, as well as event-specific security and police staffing ratios based on the risk factors of the event.
	Key Action 5.4: USHE institutions define who within the institution has the authority to grant final approval for the logistics of all campus events, including time, location, and safety measures.
	Key Action 5.5: USHE institutions conduct phased, ongoing safety assessments of campus facilities and collaborate with the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office to report findings and identify campus safety resource needs.
AREA 3: RESPONDING IN EMERGENCIES – INDIVIDUALS IN THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY	
Recommendation 6: Promote a more consistent and effective emergency response for students, faculty, staff, and visitors through common nomenclature and training.	Key Action 6.1: USHE institutions adopt the Standard Response Protocol for all hazards and the Warning Lexicon for clarity in emergency notifications.
	Key Action 6.2: USHE institutions adopt the “ Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid ” protective actions for active threats.
	Key Action 6.3: USHE institutions require all students, faculty, and staff to complete crisis response training annually, potentially using shared training across USHE institutions.
	Key Action 6.4: USHE institutions, offer regular scenario-based opportunities to practice emergency response.
	Key Action 6.5: USHE institutions maintain and annually update institutional emergency communications plans.
AREA 4: RESPONDING IN EMERGENCIES - PROFESSIONALS	
Recommendation 7: Achieve more consistent institutional responses to emergencies by leveraging a System-based approach.	Key Action 7.1: The Utah Board of Higher Education supports and secures resources to help grow the annual Utah Campus Safety Summit as a Systemwide professional development resource for safety professionals across USHE.

	Key Action 7.2: USHE institutions review and update (as necessary) their emergency response structures, using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a best-practice guide for achieving optimal clarity and consistency in decision making and operations.
	Key Action 7.3: The Commissioner of Higher Education creates a Safety Coordinator position in the Commissioner's office to facilitate the ongoing sharing of campus safety resources and best practices and to coordinate the adoption of and adherence to the Board recommendations in this report.
Recommendation 8: Enhance coordination between USHE institutions and with partners external to higher education (local, state, federal, and private entities).	Key Action 8.1: USHE institutions may execute formal mutual aid agreements with surrounding public safety agencies.
	Key Action 8.2: USHE institutions conduct regular joint physical training and joint tabletop exercises between campus police and local law enforcement.
	Key Action 8.3: USHE institutions improve communication and intelligence sharing between campus safety departments and non-higher education-based law enforcement agencies, including using the Statewide Information and Analysis Center (SIAC) .
	Key Action 8.4: USHE institutions enhance campus partnerships with the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and better leverage CISA's resources and support.
AREA 5: POST-EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS, DEBRIEFING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
Recommendation 9: Adopt consistent, formalized methods for debriefing emergencies and a System-focused approach to continuous improvement related to campus safety.	Key Action 9.1: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct an internal briefing within 24-72 hours of the conclusion of the emergency.
	Key Action 9.2: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct a formal after-action review after an emergency.
	Key Action 9.3: Following any significant safety-related incident at a USHE institution, the USHE institution communicates key information about the event with the Board through the Commissioner's office.
	Key Action 9.4: The Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office reports to Utah Board of Higher Education leadership annually regarding strategic reviews and trends in campus safety.

RESPONSE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the Board approve the USHE Campus Safety Task Force's recommendations and key actions outlined in this report.

Additionally, the Commissioner recommends that the Board direct USHE presidents to implement the recommendations and key actions outlined in this report and update the Board on institutional progress at the Board's July 2027 meeting.

The Commissioner also recommends that the Board include a placeholder request for \$5 million ongoing in its 2027 Legislative General Session consensus budget request to support the hiring of a Campus Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office and to support USHE institutions’ ability to operationalize the recommendations and key actions detailed throughout this report.

Chapter 1

Behavioral Threat Intervention and Management

Recommendation 1: Foster a culture of vigilance across USHE institutions.

Through strategic communications and integrated training, institutions can equip students, faculty, and staff with the knowledge and skills needed to identify threatening behaviors and report them to the appropriate campus experts.

Key Action 1.1: Each USHE institution launches a strategic campuswide communications plan that helps students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus identify threatening behaviors and understand how to report them.

Purpose

This key action leverages strategic communications to message the importance of vigilance across campus. As opposed to formal training (see Key Action 1.2), a communications plan relays important messages and clear instructions through asynchronous delivery, using materials individuals see and internalize throughout the course of their daily routines. These communications plans should describe the multiple modalities the institution offers for reporting threatening behavior (see Key Action 2.1), such as [SafeUT](#), institutional submission forms, text or phone call, or other methods for reporting.

Timeline and Resources

All USHE institutions should ensure they maintain a strategic campuswide communications plan about behavioral threat detection and reporting beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

Key Action 1.2: USHE institutions integrate behavioral threat education into existing trainings for students, faculty, and staff to help individuals recognize threatening behavior, know how to report it, and understand the importance of reporting.

Purpose

This key action leverages existing trainings as a touchpoint for educating students, faculty, and staff about behaviors that pose a threat to campus safety. As opposed to a strategic communications campaign (see Key Action 1.1), integrated training offers a longer-format deep dive of specifics to help prepare individuals to identify and report threatening behaviors. By integrating this content into other existing trainings and meetings, institutions can capitalize on having a captive audience, reduce the number of separate trainings individuals are asked to engage in, and help students, faculty, and staff better retain information by avoiding training fatigue.

Timeline and Resources

Beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year, USHE institutions should identify specific audiences and existing trainings that would benefit from information about behavioral threat detection and reporting. Examples could include:

- **Faculty and Staff:** New faculty and staff onboarding, ongoing training and professional development, departmental/business unit meetings where feasible and appropriate, etc.
- **Students:** New student orientation and onboarding training for student leaders, student employees, students serving as residence hall advisors, etc.

Using a shared services approach to training can help ensure content consistency and reduce administrative burden. Integrated training should be deployed by USHE institutions no later than the 2027-2028 academic year. Once appointed, the Campus Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office (see Key Action 7.3) can work with institutional experts to further refine training content or find opportunities to share training between USHE institutions.

Recommendation 2: Adopt a “funnel” approach for reporting and responding to threatening behavior.

Recommendation 2 seeks to make the behavioral threat reporting and response process as seamless and fluid as possible. The goal of this recommendation is to make it easy for individuals to report concerns so campus safety professionals can respond appropriately.

Key Action 2.1: USHE institutions offer the campus community multiple modalities for reporting threatening behavior.

Purpose

Offering individuals multiple ways to report threatening behaviors helps ensure there will be a modality to fit an individual reporter's preferences, comfort level, and circumstances. For example, if an individual is near a person exhibiting threatening behavior, sending a written communication instead of calling may be the safest way to communicate with campus officials without escalating the situation. In different circumstances, someone seeking to make a report may prefer to talk to an expert over the phone to discuss whether a certain set of behaviors rises to the level of a threat. Simple and accessible processes should mean members of the campus community will be more likely to report threatening behavior in a timely manner.

Timeline and Resources

By January 1, 2027, USHE institutions should assess which modalities they currently offer for reporting threatening behaviors and consider expanding those modalities if needed and where feasible. Modalities may include call, text, email, in-person reporting, and app-based messaging, and should include leveraging existing state-funded resources like [SafeUT](#), which is also utilized by students in Utah's

public education system, thereby creating better consistency and familiarity for students transitioning from Utah high schools to USHE institutions.

Key Action 2.2: USHE institutions ensure that all reports of threatening behavior are sent to the appropriate interdisciplinary response team to support timely assessment and response.

Purpose

While offering multiple modalities (see Key Action 2.1) helps facilitate reporting threatening behavior on the front end, it can also create challenges for timely processing after the institution receives the report. A USHE institution using multiple reporting modalities must manage a process that aggregates information from multiple sources, then siphons information to the appropriate interdisciplinary response teams so that the team can respond accordingly. USHE institutions that do not currently assign interdisciplinary response teams for behavioral threat review and intervention should develop internal interdisciplinary response teams or work with a partner institution to explore a shared services approach to behavioral threat review and intervention (see Key Action 3.1).

Timeline and Resources

By June 30, 2027, all USHE institutions should have processes in place that capture information from multiple sources and direct that information to the relevant response team(s).³

Key Action 2.3: USHE institutions ensure multiple individuals are monitoring reports of threatening behavior at any given time for redundancy.

Purpose

USHE institutions operate large, complex organizations that serve thousands of individuals every day. Within such sprawling operations, scheduling conflicts or multiple competing reports or emergencies may occur simultaneously. This complexity calls for redundancy in monitoring to ensure reports of threatening behaviors are assessed and responded to in a timely manner.

Timeline

By January 1, 2027, USHE institutions should assess and adjust, as needed, their behavioral threat assessment and response protocols to ensure redundancies in monitoring reports that enable appropriate and timely response to reports of behavioral threats.

³ The University of Utah has developed a robust approach to [behavioral threat assessment and management](#), including a sophisticated [Targeted Violence Prevention](#) approach, that can provide a helpful model for other USHE institutions to study as they develop or refine their own processes.

Recommendation 3: Establish shared service partnerships between USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges to support scalable behavioral threat intervention.

[Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management \(BTAM\)](#) is an evidence-based and systematic process to identify, inquire, assess, and manage potential threats. The US Department of Homeland Security explains, “Law enforcement, schools, workplaces, and communities are increasingly using BTAM models. By integrating these practices, states, localities, and organizations can create a more proactive and cohesive response to potential threats...” At smaller institutions with resource constraints, achieving these robust protocols and meeting staffing needs for behavioral threat assessment and management can be challenging. These same scalability challenges are why the Board implemented Title IX shared services between USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges. This approach was based on a statutory requirement under Utah Code [53H-1-203](#), which states the Board must maximize efficiency through the System by identifying and establishing shared administrative services. A working group convened starting in fall 2023 to discuss the best model for Title IX shared services. That working group developed a model for degree-granting institutions to enter into memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with technical colleges by region to provide mentorship, discuss best practices and update legal requirements, share trainings, and provide investigation services. Additionally, through this shared services model, institutions benefit from professional mentorship, annual training, and hearing coordinator services. This model has increased collaboration, enhanced consistency and efficiency, reduced risks, and improved access to Title IX resources. Deploying a similar approach in behavioral threat intervention could help address needs while accounting for capacity constraints.

Key Action 3.1: Using USHE’s Title IX shared services approach as a model, USHE institutions execute regional memorandums of understanding to facilitate degree-granting institutions providing behavioral threat intervention support to their respective technical college partners.

Purpose

By using a shared services approach, smaller USHE institutions can capitalize on the expertise and resources of institutional partners to secure sophisticated behavioral threat intervention services efficiently and at scale.

Timeline and Resources

By June 30, 2027, USHE institutions that do not operate their own in-house behavioral threat intervention services should work with a degree-granting institution partner in their designated region to explore options for a shared service partnership.

The Commissioner's office has drafted a sample MOU that institutions can customize to fit their needs; institutional general counsels or other administrators can email commissioner@ushe.edu to request a copy of this MOU template.

Once appointed, the Campus Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office (see Key Action 7.3) should also convene USHE degree-granting institutions regularly to collectively discuss behavioral threat intervention policies and procedures, updates in state or federal laws, and best practices for responding to behavioral threat reports.

Chapter 2

Safety of Events, Facilities, and Operations

Recommendation 4: Develop consistent standards and protocols for requesting and planning campus events.

Campuses serve as the host location for a variety of public and private events, including institutional events planned by campus administration, functions sponsored by individual colleges or departments, events hosted by institutionally affiliated or independent student clubs, or events arranged by private individuals or organizations with no formal ties to the institution. Centralizing and streamlining the process for scheduling events keeps relevant parties informed about the number, size, and scope of events happening on campus, and helps interdisciplinary committees assess events appropriately.

Key Action 4.1: USHE institutions require that campus events are requested through and formally approved by the institution before the event takes place. Institutions that offer multiple modalities for requesting or scheduling campus events ensure event requests aggregate to a central point so that campus police are aware of events and the appropriate interdisciplinary committees (see Key Action 5.1) can review campus event requests.

Purpose

Aggregating campus event requests helps institutions prioritize safety by keeping campus safety personnel informed about organized activities on campus. This should include events requested by employees of the institution, students, and the public. Once aggregated, institutions can then assign event requests to the appropriate interdisciplinary committees for thorough risk assessment and planning (see Key Action 5.1).

Timeline and Resources

By the conclusion of academic year 2027-2028, all USHE institutions should deploy processes to aggregate event requests on campus. These processes must involve mechanisms for informing campus police of requested events and assigning events to relevant interdisciplinary review committees for assessment (see Key Action 5.1). Once appointed, the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office can collaborate with relevant institutional administrators and staff to further refine institutional policies or practices for collecting and processing event requests.

Key Action 4.2: USHE institutions adopt policies that have a standard requirement for how far in advance a campus event must be requested. USHE institutions submit their policies to the Commissioner's office for reference.

Purpose

Each USHE institution should establish in policy a minimum standard for how far in advance campus event requests must be submitted. The specific timeframe may vary from institution to institution to suit

the size and unique needs of each campus. Establishing a minimum standard will give sufficient lead time to interdisciplinary event review committees so they can conduct a thorough analysis of risks associated with a given event so that event organizers can coordinate the personnel and resources necessary to address those risk factors (see Key Action 5.1).

Timeline

No later than June 30, 2027, all USHE institutions should submit to the Commissioner's office, for reference, a copy of the institution's policy establishing minimum standards for how early campus events must be requested.

Key Action 4.3: USHE institutions adopt policies that require consistent information fields on campus event requests. USHE institutions provide a copy of their policies to the Commissioner's office for reference.

Purpose

Requiring consistent, detailed information about the size, scope, and nature of all campus events will help institutions better assess the risks associated with each event and help the event organizers accurately gauge the security and logistics details necessary to help keep the event successful and safe. Event request forms should include, at a minimum, the following fields:

- Name of the event, with summary description
- Individuals or organizations sponsoring or hosting the event and contact information for the primary organizer
- Date, time, and duration of the event
- Location(s) or venue(s) being requested
- Anticipated number of attendees, including information about whether VIPs or high-profile public figures will be in attendance
- Event type (club, meeting, conference, lecture, concert, exhibit, fair, gala, etc.)
- A list of invited speakers, performers, or other featured guests at the event, including:
 - Names and, where applicable, titles or roles
 - Whether these individuals employ private security or staff the institution will need to coordinate with
 - Contact information for speaker, performer, or other featured guests or their staff
 - Any knowledge the requester has regarding previous reported or confirmed threats against the speaker, performer, or featured guest
- Whether the event will be ticketed and the proposed method for ticketing
- Other risk factors, including but not limited to:
 - High-value items or cash on-site

- The serving/sale of alcohol
- Amplified sounds
- Pyrotechnics
- Details about how the event will be advertised, marketed, or promoted

Timeline and Resources

No later than June 30, 2027, all USHE institutions should submit to the Commissioner’s office, for reference, a copy of the institution’s policy establishing required information fields for campus event requests.

Recommendation 5: Standardize protocols for assessing and managing risk related to campus events and daily campus operations and activities.

Recommendation 5 focuses on improving campus safety by achieving more consistency in how campuses assess the safety considerations of their facilities, daily operations, and special events.

Key Action 5.1: USHE institutions create one or more interdisciplinary committees to review campus event requests.

Purpose

Institutions serve as hubs for intellectual and cultural exploration for the students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the institution, and the broader public as well. Institutions serve as a marketplace of ideas; this requires striking a balance between prioritizing safety while avoiding censorship and protecting First Amendment free-speech rights and academic freedom, and the Board and USHE institutions are [committed](#) to upholding these fundamental principles of free expression. Assigning interdisciplinary committees with representation from multiple areas of campus to review campus event requests allows institutions to assess and account for risks in a more thorough, well-rounded, and content-neutral way. Event review committees should document their assessments and key decisions.

Timeline and Resources

By the beginning of the 2027- 2028 academic year, all USHE institutions should establish processes to aggregate event requests on campus, which must involve mechanisms for informing campus police of all requested events and working with relevant interdisciplinary review committees to assess event requests (see Key Action 4.1). By the 2027-2028 academic year, USHE institutions should also deploy interdisciplinary event review committees to review those aggregated event requests. These committees should always include representation from campus safety professionals and event and logistics

administrators; depending on the type of event request, the institution could also choose to include representation from faculty, student affairs staff, or other institutional employees.

Key Action 5.2: When an interdisciplinary event review committee identifies that an event is high-profile, features a prominent speaker, has the likelihood to garner significant attendance or public attention, or involves elevated security concerns, the committee notifies relevant institutional administrative and campus safety leaders; the institution then conducts a security and risk assessment and creates and executes a written event action plan using a scalable approach that matches the event's risk profile, attendance, venue, security considerations, and operational complexity.

Purpose

High-profile speakers, large audiences, or significant public attention can increase the complexity of event planning and execution. Assessing risk and security and producing and following a well-informed, documented event action plan can help guide decisions about how a significant event will be managed and secured, while helping all parties involved understand the security plan and their respective and collective responsibilities. Elements of these assessments and event management plans should, at a minimum, involve:

- Pre-event briefing and scheduled walk-through of the event space between event organizers and relevant administrative and campus safety personnel
- Details on how the institution will manage ticketing or gain timely access to ticketing data if the ticketing process is being administered by a third party
- Security planning, including considerations such as:
 - Command procedures
 - Communication procedures
 - Availability and positioning of emergency medical personnel
 - Line of sight assessments and plans
 - Plans for real-time monitoring of security cameras
 - Details of coordination between institutional campus safety professionals and private security (where applicable)
 - Emergency departure plans

Timeline and Resources

By the beginning of academic year 2027-2028, all USHE institutions should establish policies or procedures to help interdisciplinary event review committees define and identify when an event features a high-profile speaker, presents elevated security concerns, or has the likelihood to garner significant attendance or public attention, and establish processes to initiate security and risk assessments that culminate in the development and execution of an event action plan.

Key Action 5.3: USHE institutions, in collaboration with the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office, define and maintain consistent standards for security and police staffing ratios based on campus operational needs, as well as event-specific security and police staffing ratios based on the risk factors of the event.

Purpose

By researching best practices from multiple sectors and agreeing on standards for security and police staffing ratios based on campus occupancy and an event's risk factors, USHE institutions can achieve greater uniformity in campus security staffing ratios. Institutions should use event request fields (see Key Action 5.1 for a list of fields) in assessing risk factors and the risk level of events, as well as resources and information in the Statewide Information and Analysis Center (SIAC – see Key Action 8.3).

Implementation and Resources

Once the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office is deployed, USHE institutions should collaborate with the Safety Coordinator to define and begin to maintain consistent standards for security and police staffing ratios based on campus occupancy and the risk level of the event, speaker, or featured guest. An inherent challenge of this exercise is identifying how to staff events appropriately while ensuring resource constraints don't cause an unintentional chilling effect on free speech or intellectual exploration; as institutions and the Safety Coordinator work together to contemplate staffing standards, they should strive to balance safety with free and open inquiry. National professional resources, such as those offered by the [International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators \(IACLEA\)](#), can help inform these discussions and decisions.

Other Considerations

Helping institutions meet recommended standards for security and police staffing ratios may require additional resources for security and policing personnel, which was contemplated as part of the Board's \$5 million placeholder consensus budget request for the 2027 Legislative General Session.

Key Action 5.4: USHE institutions define who within the institution has the authority to grant final approval for the logistics of all campus events, including time, location, and safety measures.

Purpose

While leveraging an interdisciplinary committee to review event requests ensures individuals with different perspectives and roles help assess risk and highlight logistical considerations and needs (see Key Action 5.1), defining a clear chain of decision-making by identifying one or more individuals who have final authority to approve event logistics provides better operational clarity, consistency, and accountability.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should identify the individual(s) who has (have) the authority to grant final approval for the logistics of all campus events, including time, location, and safety measures, and the corresponding approval processes by the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year.

Key Action 5.5: USHE institutions conduct phased, ongoing safety assessments of campus facilities and collaborate with the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office to report findings and identify campus safety resource needs.

Purpose

[House Bill 84](#) in Utah’s 2024 Legislative General Session created the position of State Security Chief to collaborate with Utah’s K-12 public education system on multiple school safety initiatives, [including](#) “establishing building and safety standards for all public and private schools.” HB 84 also [required](#) county security chiefs to “conduct, or coordinate with a designee from the local law enforcement agency of a relevant jurisdiction to conduct, [a] school safety needs assessment [and] conduct a building safety evaluation at least annually using the results of the school safety needs assessment to recommend and implement improvements to school facilities, policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and regulations relating to school safety and security.”

In 2025, [First Substitute HB 40](#) sought to expand similar initiatives to higher education by requiring USHE institutions to conduct annual safety needs assessments that would have included a comprehensive evaluation of campus security infrastructure. While the version of HB 40 that passed ([Seventh Substitute](#)) did not include these specific statutory requirements for higher education, the USHE Campus Safety Task Force feels that institutions would benefit from conducting regular assessments of facilities and infrastructure security. These assessments could be developed with support from the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office and could include assessing for the availability and functionality of safety features, including but not limited to the presence and functionality of locks on classroom doors; secure entry or badge access to secure or restricted areas; security camera placement and functionality; availability of first aid kits, bleed kits, automated external defibrillators (AEDs); and more.

Implementation and Resources

USHE institutions that do not already engage in this practice should begin conducting safety assessments of campus facilities no later than the 2027-2028 academic year. Considering the size of campuses and the number of facilities institutions operate, the scale of this exercise justifies a phased, ongoing approach to assessment.

National resources such as the [CISA Infrastructure Survey Tool](#) can help institutions take a proactive, structured, and informed approach to cybersecurity assessments. And, although the [Partner Alliance for Safer Schools' School Safety and Security Checklist](#) was developed for K-12 schools, many of the best practices in this checklist can be applied to or modified for use on college campuses.

Once the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office is appointed, institutions should communicate their safety assessment findings to the Safety Coordinator and contemplate their respective resource needs with the Commissioner's office. While the scope of infrastructure improvement needs will not be understood until this key action has been implemented, this exercise could result in the need to request significant appropriations from the Utah legislature in future General Sessions to facilitate improvements to facilities and infrastructure, as was the [case](#) when Utah's public schools undertook this initiative.

Chapter 3

Responding in Emergencies – Individuals in the Campus Community

Recommendation 6: Promote a more consistent and effective emergency response for students, faculty, staff, and visitors through common nomenclature and training.

Giving members of the campus community consistent, clear instructions for how to respond during an emergency – as well as providing ample opportunities to reinforce their understanding and repeatedly practice those instructions – may result in better outcomes in emergencies by helping individuals understand how to respond.

Utah’s K-12 public school system has adopted the Standard Response Protocol (see Key Action 6.1) and “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” (see Key Action 6.2), and Utah’s executive state agencies are considering these protocols. Since many USHE students come from Utah’s public school system, adopting these shared frameworks can help enhance safety by unifying vernacular, reducing cognitive load and decreasing the decision time in high-stress events, and improving cooperation with first responders.⁴

Key Action 6.1: USHE institutions adopt the [Standard Response Protocol](#) for all hazards and the Warning Lexicon for clarity in emergency notifications.

Purpose

The [“I Love U Guys” Foundation](#), founded in 2006 by Ellen and John-Michael Keyes and named after the last texts their daughter sent them before losing her life in a school shooting, has created programs for crisis response that have been used in more than 78,000 schools, districts, agencies, and organizations around the world. The foundation developed the [Standard Response Protocol](#) (SRP) as a unified approach to emergency communication and action through which institutions can issue five different formal instructions⁵:

- **Hold:** *Stay in your room or area.* This may be used if emergency personnel are responding to a situation that does not pose a threat to others in the building.
- **Secure:** *Get or stay inside, lock outside doors.* This is used when the threat is outside the building or in another area of campus. Individuals are instructed to lock outside doors and stay inside until the “all clear” is announced.
- **Lockdown:** *Locks, lights, out of sight.* This is used for immediate threats – typically inside the building. Individuals are instructed to lock or barricade individual rooms, turn off lights, and stay out of sight.

⁴ State of Utah Executive Briefing on Unified Response Protocols for the State of Utah

⁵ Adapted from University of Utah Emergency Management [resources](#) on the Standard Response Protocol

- **Evacuate:** *Get to a safer location.* An evacuation order will direct individuals to a safer area, which could be outside or another area in a building.
- **Shelter:** *Pay attention to the announced hazard and instructions.* These instructions will be based on the situation, such as an earthquake or severe weather.

The Warning Lexicon⁶ serves as a helpful companion checklist to the SRP. Whereas the SRP outlines the five specific instruction types institutions give for emergency response, the Warning Lexicon details what other key pieces of information should accompany those instructions for optimal clarity, including:

1. Source: *who is communicating the message (e.g., University of Utah Department of Public Safety)*
2. Hazard: *what type of hazard the campus is facing*
3. Hazard Impacts: *what threat the hazard poses to people, places, or operations*
4. Location: *Where the hazard is located*
5. Guidance: *SRP's term of art (e.g., "Secure") and accompanying directive (e.g., "Get or stay inside, lock outside doors.")*
6. Next communication: *When individuals can expect to receive more information or updates from the institution*

Example of a communication combining SRP and the Warning Lexicon⁷:

"[INSTITUTION NAME] CAMPUS ALERT: LOCKDOWN
Dangerous person reported near the [name of building] and adjacent walkways.
People in the area could be at immediate risk.
LOCKDOWN now in all nearby buildings: locks, lights, out of sight. Stay inside secured rooms and
keep hallways clear while police respond. Avoid the area.
Next update by 3:45 PM."

Timeline and Resources

All USHE institutions should transition to exclusively using the SRP and Warning Lexicon in all relevant emergency materials, communications, and trainings by the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year.

Key Action 6.2: USHE institutions adopt the "Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid" protective actions for active threats.

⁶ Adapted from University of Utah Emergency Management presentation on safety alerts, warnings, and protective actions

⁷ Adapted from University of Utah Emergency Management presentation on safety alerts, warnings, and protective actions

Purpose

The “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” terminology was [developed](#) by Texas State University’s Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) program in 2002 to equip individuals with the skills needed to increase their situational awareness in emergencies and be ready to act quickly and effectively to protect their own safety and the safety of those around them. The transition from older “Run, Hide, Fight” models to “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” offers multiple advantages:

Component	Strategic Benefit
AVOID	Prioritizes distance and situational awareness as the primary defense (whereas “Run” could be interpreted more literally and could result in panic responses that lead to more disorderly evacuation and could compound safety concerns, especially when quiet avoidance may be the safer option to help an individual evade an aggressor’s attention).
DENY	Focuses on physical barriers and environmental manipulation to keep the threat out (as opposed to “Hide”, which could result in individuals hiding under or behind objects immediately without also taking steps to alter the physical space to deny entry, such as locking or barricading doors).
DEFEND	Empowers individuals with the mental permission to protect their lives as a last resort (as opposed to “Fight”, “Defend” better implies using not just one’s body, but the physical space, materials, and any other resources around them to disengage, inhibit, or incapacitate an active aggressor).
AID	Introduces immediate post-incident care, addressing the leading cause of preventable death among active aggressor victims: hemorrhage (“Run, Hide, Fight” does not contemplate a step for first aid).

Adapted from State of Utah Executive Briefing on Unified Response Protocols for the State of Utah.

There are important distinctions between the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid”. The SRP involves the institution formally communicating to individuals during an emergency and instructing them to take one of five specific actions (hold, secure, lockdown, evacuate, or shelter); the individuals receiving these instructions may not be in the immediate vicinity of the emergency and may only be able to rely on this formal messaging to inform their decisions and actions, rather than relying on real-time sensory information about an emergency unfolding in their presence. Additionally, SRP can be applied to any emergency, from natural disasters to active aggressors.

“Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid”, on the other hand, are the protective actions individuals can become programmed through repetition to instinctively execute in the case of an active aggressor; the goal of “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” is for individuals to use these tools to act based on the sensory input of emergency events happening near them in real time, even without receiving formal communication from the institution in the moment. Both frameworks serve unique purposes, complement each other, and should be used together to optimize campus safety.

Timeline and Resources

All USHE institutions should adopt the “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” protective actions and integrate this terminology into relevant materials and trainings by the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year.

Key Action 6.3: USHE institutions require all students, faculty, and staff to complete crisis response training annually, potentially using shared training across USHE institutions.

Purpose

Once USHE institutions have adopted the Standard Response Protocol (see Key Action 6.1) and “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” (see Key Action 6.2), annual trainings - partnered with visual messaging around campus - can help promote awareness of these emergency response processes. As an example, the University of Utah Department of Public Safety recently produced both [short-](#) and [long-form](#) active aggressor training videos with the intent of allowing other institutions to repurpose these videos for their own campuses. As of summer 2026, nearly 44,000 University of Utah employees in the academic and healthcare systems completed the introductory training as part of their annual compliance requirements.

Timeline and Resources

By the 2027-2028 academic year, all USHE institutions should develop training on SRP and “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” and establish and enforce annual training requirements on these topics for all students, faculty, and staff. Institutions may also consider partnering with the University of Utah to repurpose their active aggressor video [training materials](#).

Additionally, once the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office is appointed, the Safety Coordinator should partner with institutions to develop and facilitate annual deep-dive training for select employees from various areas of each campus (HR, student affairs, faculty, etc.) that helps non-emergency management professionals explore crisis management principles and best practices.

Key Action 6.4: USHE institutions offer regular scenario-based opportunities to practice emergency response.

Purpose

While online modules and visual materials can help individuals understand what protective actions to take in an emergency, opportunities to practice these actions are also important for reinforcing the skills and expediting the time it takes individuals to act in high-stress situations. However, higher education is very decentralized in its locations and schedules, which eliminates the option to conduct the types of synchronous drills K-12 schools hold.

USHE institutions can encourage asynchronous activities to address this challenge while still capitalizing on the benefits of scenario-based practice. An example of this kind of initiative is the [Great Utah ShakeOut](#), where the state encourages agencies, institutions, political subdivisions, and individual Utahns to participate in an earthquake drill one day each year at the location and time of their choice.

Timeline and Resources

Institutions should offer students, faculty, and staff opportunities to practice protective actions and protocols no later than the 2027-2028 academic year. The Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office, once appointed, can be a resource in developing or refining these protocols.

Key Action 6.5: USHE institutions maintain and annually update institutional emergency communications plans.

Purpose

Having an emergency communications plan helps institutions ensure they can quickly deliver accurate, timely information during emergencies. Regularly updating these plans helps the institution account for changes in technology, personnel, campus populations, and emerging threats, improving the effectiveness of the communication. As part of the institutional emergency communications plan, all institutions should ensure that students, faculty, and staff are automatically opted in to emergency communications from the institution by default, with an option to opt out only if the user deliberately chooses to do so. An institutional emergency communications plan should include processes for testing the functionality of the institution's emergency communications systems at least every six months.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should review and update their existing emergency communications plans in the 2026-2027 academic year and continue to conduct updates every year thereafter. The annual update of these emergency communications plans should be scheduled each year to fit within the timeline of Clery Act requirements; this will help ensure that the information the institution includes in its Clery [Annual Security Report](#) reflects the most up-to-date and accurate information about relevant institutional procedures and plans. Once appointed, the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office can assist institutions with refining and annually updating these emergency communications plans.

Chapter 4

Responding in Emergencies – Professionals

Recommendation 7: Achieve more consistent institutional responses to emergencies by leveraging a System-based approach.

Recommendation 7 focuses on leveraging shared standards and resources to facilitate professional development and unify emergency response strategies across USHE.

Key Action 7.1: The Utah Board of Higher Education supports and secures resources to help grow the annual [Utah Campus Safety Summit](#) as a Systemwide professional development resource for safety professionals across USHE.

Purpose

Since 2023, the University of Utah has hosted an annual [Utah Campus Safety Summit](#). During the Summit, campus and government professionals working in law enforcement, security, behavioral threat intervention, and emergency management share best practices and engage in professional development. The Summit is open to all USHE institutions and has grown so significantly in the last four years that the institution has had to leverage a wait list to try to manage demand, and has recently expanded to offer regional, collaborative workshops in partnership with other USHE institutions to supplement the primary summit and expand access to training across the state. “Since 2022, the Utah Campus Safety Summit has provided a valuable opportunity for higher education and public safety teams throughout our state to train together, learn alongside partners, and strengthen collaboration,” says University of Utah Chief Safety Officer Keith Squires. “We have been fortunate to host a wide range of outstanding presenters, whose expertise and experienced insights have supported our shared efforts to enhance safety for all of Utah’s students, faculty, and staff. By bringing together subject matter experts, public safety professionals, institutional leaders, and community partners, the University of Utah aims for the Utah Campus Safety Summit to remain a meaningful platform for sharing knowledge and continually improving practices statewide.”

Timeline

During the 2026-2027 academic year, the Board and Commissioner’s office should explore options for providing additional resources to help the University of Utah serve more professionals across USHE with this shared training opportunity, which was contemplated as part of the Board’s \$5 million placeholder campus safety request in the Board’s consensus budget request for the 2027 Legislative General Session. Once appointed, the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office can also serve as a resource to help support the Utah Campus Safety Summit.

Key Action 7.2: USHE institutions review and update (as necessary) their emergency response structures, using the [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#) as a best-practice guide for achieving optimal clarity and consistency in decision-making and operations.

Purpose

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#) “guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from incidents.” NIMS’ [guidance and tools](#) provide best practices to help different jurisdictions work in partnership to cohesively respond to crises. Rather than mandating the use of the NIMS resources and frameworks, the task force recommends institutions familiarize themselves with these resources and use them as tools to review and update their emergency response structures as needed.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should review their emergency response structures during the 2026-2027 academic year and, where updates are deemed necessary, implement updates to response structures no later than June 30, 2027.

Key Action 7.3: The Commissioner of Higher Education creates a Safety Coordinator position in the Commissioner’s office to facilitate the ongoing sharing of campus safety resources and best practices and to coordinate the adoption of and adherence to the Board recommendations in this report.

Purpose

Hiring a full-time professional in the Commissioner’s office with relevant knowledge, skills, and experience in campus safety and emergency management principles will help USHE build upon the foundational work of the task force and sustain more cohesion and continuous improvements in campus safety across the System. This approach has precedent within higher education governance systems; the California State University system, for example, is a higher education governing agency that [houses](#) a systemwide Campus Safety and Security division and employs a Chief Compliance Officer and a systemwide Public Safety Analyst.

The Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office could be responsible for the following, non-exhaustive list of duties:

- Work with USHE institutions to help them implement the recommendations from this report;
- Co-develop and help facilitate trainings as a shared service across USHE;
- Support institutions with resources as they develop or review campus safety procedures;
- Serve as the liaison between the Board and USHE institutions for receiving information about significant safety-related events;

- Regularly convene campus safety experts across USHE to form a community of practice that shares challenges, ideas, best practices, and relevant resources. Each USHE institution should designate at least one institutional representative to participate in this group;
- Work collaboratively with campuses regarding event policies and procedures; and
- Advise the Board and Commissioner on campus safety-related issues.

Implementation and Resources

Financial resources will be needed to sustain a new, full-time Safety Coordinator position in the Commissioner's office, which was contemplated as part of the Board's \$5 million placeholder consensus budget request for the 2027 Legislative General Session.

Recommendation 8: Enhance coordination between campuses and with partners external to higher education (local, state, federal, and private entities).

Higher education institutions do not operate in a vacuum; rather, campuses are embedded within communities, and campus police departments exist within a broader ecosystem of municipalities and counties with their own law enforcement and public safety structures and resources. Prioritizing formal coordination between institutions and their surrounding partner law enforcement and first responder agencies can help USHE maximize campus safety.

Key Action 8.1: USHE institutions may execute formal mutual aid agreements with surrounding public safety agencies.

Purpose

Mutual aid agreements are formal, reciprocal contracts between agencies that outline frameworks for sharing personnel and resources during emergencies or natural disasters. Utah Code [53H-3-304](#) contemplates these cooperative relationships between campus police and state and local law enforcement, and several USHE institutions represented on the task force already engage in this practice with municipalities in their region and appreciate the benefits of this approach, including shared services and joint training that help deter threats, expedite emergency response, and promote safety on campus.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should make a good-faith effort to execute or update mutual aid agreements with relevant surrounding agencies no later than June 30, 2027. These agreements should, at minimum, establish plans for resource sharing across geographical and jurisdictional boundaries, define liability,

and outline reimbursement protocols. The [National Incident Management System’s Guidelines for Mutual Aid](#) is a comprehensive resource to help guide the development and assessment of these agreements.

Key Action 8.2: USHE institutions conduct regular joint physical training and joint tabletop exercises between campus police and local law enforcement.

Purpose

Conducting joint tabletop exercises (discussion-based simulations) and joint physical training (in-person exercises) builds interoperability and enhances coordination between agencies, which promotes a more streamlined and effective response during crises. Some USHE institutions represented on the task force already engage in this practice and express that these activities help public safety officers realistically imitate high-stress situations that require crucial decision-making, allowing partners to break down jurisdictional barriers, share information and best practices, align response strategies, and pool resources effectively long before a crisis occurs. This proactive teamwork supports faster, safer, and more efficient mutual aid response during major incidents.

Timeline and Resources

Institutions should work with partner agencies to identify the most beneficial content and cadence for these exercises and should consider formally outlining a plan for joint tabletop exercises and physical trainings in their mutual aid agreement. If surrounding agencies agree to partner, USHE institutions should begin conducting joint tabletop exercises and physical trainings with relevant surrounding partner agencies no later than the 2027-2028 academic year.

Key Action 8.3: USHE institutions improve communication and intelligence sharing between campus safety departments and non-higher education-based law enforcement agencies, including using the [Statewide Information and Analysis Center](#) (SIAC).

Purpose

[The Statewide Information and Analysis Center](#) (SIAC), operated by the Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS), serves as a [fusion center](#) for information sharing between local and federal public safety partners. The [SIAC](#) “supports Utah law enforcement with case support, criminal information reports, and threat assessments, focusing on crimes conducted in drug and human trafficking, criminal gangs, cyber threats, terrorism, mass threats of violence, and others.”

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions, as part of their existing partnerships with DPS and as allowed by policies, regulations, and laws, should ensure ongoing and active participation in the SIAC by January 1, 2027. Specifically,

each USHE institution with a campus police department should, by January 1, 2027, designate at least one Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO) on their staff who will serve as a main point of contact and primary collaborator with DPS and SIAC. As part of this collaboration, DPS has committed to employing an analyst who specializes in higher education to help lead regular information sharing between higher education institutions and surrounding public safety agencies. The Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office, once appointed, should work with DPS to facilitate regular meetings and trainings between SIAC and USHE institution ILOs.

Key Action 8.4: USHE institutions enhance campus partnerships with the federal [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) and better leverage CISA's resources and support.

Purpose

The US Department of Homeland Security's [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) (CISA) was created in 2018 to help identify and manage risks to cyber and physical infrastructure. CISA offers both self-directed resources and professional partnership guidance to both private and public organizations, including higher education institutions.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions that do not already collaborate with CISA should establish a relationship with the regional Protective Security Advisor assigned to Utah ([Region 8](#)) and ensure that relevant staff have begun leveraging CISA's resources and services no later than June 30, 2027. The Region 8 CISA advisor voiced support for the campus safety task force early in its development, and the Commissioner's office can connect USHE institutions with the regional Protective Security Advisor for Region 8.

Chapter 5

Post-Emergency Communications, Debriefing, and Continuous Improvement

Recommendation 9: Adopt consistent, formalized methods for debriefing emergencies and a System-focused approach to continuous improvement related to campus safety.

Recommendation 9 intends to achieve greater consistency in how USHE institutions analyze and formally debrief emergencies, using methods informed by industry standards. Recommendation 9 also introduces an opportunity for institutions to work with the Board after significant campus safety-related incidents to share information, lessons, and best practices, and promote continuous improvement across USHE.

Key Action 9.1: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct an internal briefing within 24-72 hours of the conclusion of the emergency.

Purpose

An internal briefing, sometimes referred to as a “hot wash”, is a facilitated discussion in the near-immediate aftermath of an emergency or safety-related incident designed to help campus officials reflect on the events and provide their feedback and analysis about the response while the details of the incident are fresh in their memories.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should develop a process to ensure an internal briefing is conducted 24-72 hours after any campus emergency by the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year. The [Ohio School Safety Center](#) has created multiple resources and trainings for emergency management applicable to professionals across the country, including a [“Hot Wash” Guide](#), which links to supplemental materials, such as a PowerPoint presentation template and note-taking template to use during an internal briefing.

Key Action 9.2: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct a formal after-action review after an emergency.

Purpose

Many sectors use after-action reviews to promote reflection and continuous improvement. In the public safety context, an after-action review [refers](#) to a “team-based process following a critical incident [that] provides all participants the chance to reflect, share observations, and identify promising practices. By focusing on collective learning and ‘preventable error’, law enforcement agencies can make changes in critical incident response policy, practice, and organizational culture without assigning individual blame.”

Whereas one benefit of conducting a hot wash 24-72 hours after an incident is that events are fresh in the participants’ memories (see Key Action 9.1), an after-action review’s more delayed approach provides

additional benefits because this structure allows individuals time to more fully process the event and thoughtfully develop their feedback.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should develop a process to ensure an after-action review is conducted after any campus emergency by the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year. The National Police Foundation and the US Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services have created a [guide](#) for conducting after-action reviews that can help USHE institutions develop and refine their approach to this key action.

Key Action 9.3: Following any significant safety-related incident at a USHE institution, the USHE institution communicates key information about the event with the Board through the Commissioner's office.

Purpose

Using the information gathered through the internal briefing and after-action review, USHE institutions should collaborate with the Commissioner's office to debrief the Board, within a reasonable amount of time, on any safety-related event that posed a significant risk to health, safety, or campus operations. This System-based approach to analysis and continuous improvement will ultimately help all USHE institutions contemplate and better prepare for potential emergency scenarios on their campuses.

Timeline and Resources

USHE institutions should communicate key information about significant safety-related incidents to the Board immediately. Once hired and onboarded, the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office (see Key Action 7.3) should develop a process to ensure strategic reviews are conducted with USHE institutions after any significant safety-related incident. This provides an opportunity to share lessons learned from safety-related events with all USHE institutions.

Key Action 9.4: The Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office reports to the Utah Board of Higher Education leadership annually regarding strategic reviews and trends in campus safety.

Purpose

Once appointed, the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner's office should report to Board leadership at least annually. This report should be informed by year-round collaboration with institutions, as well as by information USHE institutions share with the Safety Coordinator after significant safety-related events (see Key Action 9.3).

This Key Action provides the Board with an opportunity to remain engaged in important campus-safety-related work and helps formalize and sustain System-based coordination efforts after the USHE Campus Safety Task Force concludes its work.

Timeline for Implementing Key Actions

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTIONS	
Timeline	Key Actions
Immediately	Key Action 9.3: Following any significant safety-related incident at a USHE institution, the USHE institution communicates key information about the event with the Board through the Commissioner's office.
Beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year	Key Action 1.1: Each USHE institution launches a strategic campuswide communications plan that helps students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus identify threatening behaviors and understand how to report them. Key Action 6.5: USHE institutions maintain and annually update institutional emergency communications plans. Key Action 7.1: The Utah Board of Higher Education supports and secures resources to help grow the annual <u>Utah Campus Safety Summit</u> as a Systemwide professional development resource for safety professionals across USHE.
By January 1, 2027	Key Action 2.1: USHE institutions offer the campus community multiple modalities for reporting threatening behavior. Key Action 2.3: USHE institutions ensure multiple individuals are monitoring reports of threatening behavior at any given time for redundancy. Key Action 8.3: USHE institutions improve communication and intelligence sharing between campus safety departments and non-higher education-based law enforcement agencies, including using the <u>Statewide Information and Analysis Center</u> (SIAC).
By June 30, 2027	Key Action 2.2: USHE institutions ensure that all reports of threatening behavior are sent to the appropriate interdisciplinary response team to support timely assessment and response. Key Action 3.1: Using USHE's Title IX shared services approach as a model, USHE institutions execute regional memorandums of understanding to facilitate degree-granting institutions providing behavioral threat intervention support to their respective technical college partners.

	Key Action 4.2: USHE institutions adopt policies that have a standard requirement for how far in advance a campus event must be requested. USHE institutions submit their policies to the Commissioner’s office for reference. Key Action 4.3: USHE institutions adopt policies that require consistent information fields on campus event requests. USHE institutions provide a copy of their policies to the Commissioner’s office for reference. Key Action 7.2: USHE institutions review and update (as necessary) their emergency response structures, using the <u>National Incident Management System (NIMS)</u> as a best-practice guide for achieving optimal clarity and consistency in decision making and operations. Key Action 8.1: USHE institutions may execute formal mutual aid agreements with surrounding public safety agencies. Key Action 8.4: USHE institutions enhance campus partnerships with the federal <u>Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency</u> and better leverage CISA’s resources and support.
Beginning no later than in the 2027-2028 academic year	Key Action 1.2: USHE institutions integrate behavioral threat education into existing trainings for students, faculty, and staff to help individuals recognize threatening behavior, know how to report it, and understand the importance of reporting. Key Action 5.1: USHE institutions create one or more interdisciplinary committees to review campus event requests. Key Action 5.2: When an interdisciplinary event review committee identifies that an event is high-profile, features a prominent speaker, has the likelihood to garner significant attendance or public attention, or involves elevated security concerns, the committee notifies relevant institutional administrative and campus safety leaders; the institution then conducts a security and risk assessment and creates and executes a written event action plan using a scalable approach that matches the event’s risk profile, attendance, venue, security considerations, and operational complexity.

	Key Action 5.4: USHE institutions define who within the institution has the authority to grant final approval for the logistics of all campus events, including time, location, and safety measures. Key Action 5.5: USHE institutions conduct phased, ongoing safety assessments of campus facilities and collaborate with the Safety Coordinator in the Commissioner’s office to report findings and identify campus safety resource needs. Key Action 6.1: USHE institutions adopt the Standard Response Protocol for all hazards and the Warning Lexicon for clarity in emergency notifications. Key Action 6.2: USHE institutions adopt the “Avoid, Deny, Defend, and Aid” protective actions for active threats. Key Action 6.3: USHE institutions require all students, faculty, and staff to complete crisis response training annually, potentially using shared training across USHE institutions. Key Action 6.4: USHE institutions offer regular scenario-based opportunities to practice emergency response. Key Action 8.2: USHE institutions conduct regular joint physical training and joint tabletop exercises between campus police and local law enforcement. Key Action 9.1: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct an internal briefing within 24-72 hours of the conclusion of the emergency. Key Action 9.2: USHE institutions that experience an emergency conduct a formal after-action review after an emergency.
By the conclusion of academic year 2027-2028	Key Action 4.1: USHE institutions require that campus events are requested through and formally approved by the institution before the event takes place. Institutions that offer multiple modalities for requesting or scheduling campus events ensure event requests aggregate to a central point so that campus police are aware of events and the appropriate interdisciplinary committees (see Key Action 5.1) can review campus event requests.

List of Linked Resources

In order of appearance in report

- [University of Utah Public Safety Framework](#)
- [SafeUT](#)
- [Preventing campus violence through behavioral threat assessment and management](#) (University of Utah)
- [Targeted Violence Prevention](#) (University of Utah)
- [Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management \(BTAM\)](#) (US Department of Homeland Security)
- [Infrastructure Survey Tool](#) (US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency/CISA)
- [Partner Alliance for Safer Schools' School Safety and Security Checklist](#)
- [Standard Response Protocol](#) (I Love U Guys Foundation)
- [Avoid, Deny, Defend](#) (Texas State University Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training)
- [Active Threat Training video](#), short form (University of Utah)
- [Active Threat Training: In-Depth Video](#) (University of Utah)
- [Active Threat Preparedness](#) (University of Utah)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [National Incident Management System](#) (NIMS) [Guidance and Tools](#)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [National Incident Management System](#) (NIMS) [Guideline for Mutual Aid](#)
- [Statewide Information and Analysis Center \(SIAC\)](#) (Utah Department of Public Safety)
- [Hotwash Guide](#) (Ohio School Safety Center)
- [How to Conduct an After-Action Review](#) (National Policing Institute)

USHE representatives on the task force have expressed willingness to share their institution's templates, materials, and resources with administrative and law enforcement professionals at other USHE institutions to support implementation of the key recommendations from this report. The Commissioner's office can facilitate these institutional requests to connect and collaborate.