



December 17, 2012

Dear MiraCosta College Colleagues,

To each of you and your families, Happy Holidays from the Office of the President! As final exams wrap up today, I wanted to take a moment to recognize and appreciate all the hard work of our faculty, staff and administrators. Your dedication to student success makes a difference in the lives of thousands of individuals each year.

I also want to update you about the safety policies and procedures that are in place here at MiraCosta College, in light of the terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. We hope that our college will never face a similar situation; however, we must do everything we can to ensure that we are prepared for emergencies and are ready as an institution should a threat exist to the safety of our staff or students. Below is useful information related to the college's emergency procedures, threat assessment group, and emergency communication.

Remembering the Victims

As a mark of respect for the victims of the senseless acts of violence perpetrated on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, and by order of the President of the United States, the flags at MiraCosta College, along with those on all government lands, are being flown at half-staff until sunset tomorrow.

The Office of the President will be collecting cards and donations to send to Sandy Hook Elementary, should you wish to drop one by my office or send to MS 7, please do so by the afternoon of Thursday, December 20. If you wish to send cards on your own, the school's address is 12 Dickenson Drive, Sandy Hook, CT 06482.

Emergency Procedures – Do's and Don'ts

There is no absolute way to respond to every type of emergency situation, but here are some recommendations for several types of incidents. A PDF is attached with these instructions, along with evacuation maps of all three campuses.

If a shooting on campus occurs outside and you are inside a classroom or building:

- Remain inside the building.
- Using a key or electronic fob, lock the door and close it.
- Close all blinds, stay away from windows.
- Turn off all lights.

- Stay down on the ground, do not move or peek out to see what is happening.
- Wait and listen for directions from police.

If a shooting occurs while you are outside:

- Move or crawl away from the shooter or gunfire; utilize any barriers between you and the gunfire.
- Try to get inside or behind a building and stay down.
- Wait and listen for directions from police.

If a fire, earthquake, bomb threat, chemical or biological emergency occurs:

- Leave the affected area and close the door behind you. (For earthquakes it is recommended that you seek cover under a table or in a doorway for a few minutes for probable aftershock, then evacuate the building, closing the door behind you.)
- Do not touch any suspected bomb, and do not use your cell phone anywhere near a suspected bomb. Do not attempt to clean up any possible chemical spill.
- Go directly to the nearest Emergency Evacuation Area (all are in open space areas— see back of card). Look for red signs posted at all sites indicating Emergency Evacuation Areas.
- Do not re-enter the classroom or other space from which you exited until you have been told it is okay to do so by fire or police personnel.

The College's Threat Assessment Group

MiraCosta College's Threat Assessment Group (TAG), formed pursuant to MiraCosta Community College District Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 3510, serves as an arm of the college's overall Emergency Preparedness Program. The main goal of TAG is to identify problems before they escalate, and help individuals before they become a threat to the campus community.

TAG enhances the district's threat assessment capacity by proactively providing a safe learning and working environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors. To this end, TAG takes a multidisciplinary approach by:

- Developing threat assessment and management processes.
- Coordinating and supporting campus-wide ad-hoc behavioral intervention teams (BIT) through training and professional consultation.
- Ensuring communication between college law enforcement, student services, counseling, DSPS, health services, legal counsel, public information office, college constituencies, and any other appropriate campus entity.
- Facilitating the sharing of information, timely and effective intervention, and a coordinated response.
- Developing a program manual that will centralize MCCCDC policies, procedures, state and federal law and codify processes, as it relates to threat assessment at MiraCosta College.

Another component of threat assessment is the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT). The BIT *collects* information, then *connects* this information to team members who attempt to *prevent* possible harm by recommending appropriate action and assisting individuals.

The key element of threat assessment is the reporting aspect. The reporting process is available to faculty, staff and students and can be used to report concerns about an individual's behavior and/or spoken words, or in reaction to an incident that may have occurred. There is a form available for this reporting process, it can be found on the staff portal. For more information about TAG, contact Associate Dean Nikki Schaper at nschaper@miracosta.edu.

Emergency Communication

The college has outdoor speakers installed at all campuses, as well as an intercom system via college phones that will alert you of an emergency should one occur. The college is also entering into an agreement to utilize a powerful Emergency Notifications Platform founded at Stanford University that will enable us to communicate with faculty and staff via multiple mediums.

The college also communicates regularly via our social media platform and via our website. Follow us on facebook.com/miracostacc or twitter.com/miracosta, where you can get up-to-date information should there be a campus emergency.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming months, I would like to encourage thoughtful conversations about campus safety. I know this is a topic on the minds of us all, and I believe that we can never be prepared enough. Further communications about campus safety will occur in the future.

In the meantime, enjoy your holidays and I look forward to reconnecting with you all in the New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President