

Student Safety

Students of ENG101 Day Class – 3/3/2014

English 101

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Campus security continues to be an important issue for students across the United States, regardless of the grade level or type of school. With increased instances of violence in school, as well as other “common” security concerns such as theft and property damage, the question of appropriate security continues to be an issue. One of the strongest arguments in favor of developing appropriate security measures is that having these systems in place helps lessen or even remove the concerns of students, faculty, and staff on campus (Rowh, 2012). If students are not concerned with security issues, they are better able to concentrate on their studies and achieving their academic goals. Similarly, faculty and staff who are not constantly worried about security are better able to focus on meeting the needs of their students and communities. Having an appropriate balance of security measures, from physical security deterrents such as camera surveillance systems to unseen security protocols such as panic buttons and internal procedures, presents an appropriate level of security visibility that in many cases prevents instances of crime or violence on campus (Rowh, 2012). While the specific measures used may vary depending on the specific campus and situation, there is no doubt that campus security issues are an important concern that must be appropriately addressed at each campus.

There are several outside security issues. Property damage, theft, and personal safety are the main issues with the current lack of security. Due to the lack of cameras and speed bumps in the parking lot, there have been several incidents with students’ cars. Vehicles cutting through the parking lot endanger the students, faculty, and staff. Within the class population, there have been three incidents of car damage and one incident of theft. These occurrences are often unreported and unresolved due to the lack of security measures and evidence to support claims.

In addition, security inside the school is not as effective as students think it should be. This brings many concerns to students, faculty, and staff on what measures should be taken.

With the lack of security measures in the laboratories, classrooms, and public areas such as hallways and stairs, more safety incidents can occur. Examples of this include theft, property damage, and personal safety. In addition, any civilian with the same uniform can pose as a student or instructor of Anthem College. With the inadequacies in security, the campus is left open to possible harm to students, faculty, and staff, which in turn leads to greater campus liability.

As an example of the current lack of security, a blind study was conducted on March 19, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. Two subjects, one dressed in partial school uniform (out of dress code) and another in professional civilian attire, were instructed to roam the hallways of the school until stopped by faculty or staff. Each subject had a checklist of certain locations around the school, including all laboratories and several common areas, to note whether they could access easily. Subjects were not allowed to enter any areas or take anything, but upon conclusion of the study, both subjects confirmed that it would have been easy to take anything they wanted from those areas. The subjects were allowed to interact with staff and faculty, as well as being able to use innovative deception to not be noticed. The two subjects worked independently and found all locations on their own with ease.

After 35 minutes, the subject in civilian clothes was escorted to the front and instructed to get a visitor badge. After 46 minutes, the subject in school attire was stopped after making herself more visible and asked to show her badge. Each subject noted that he or she had conversations with faculty and staff and were either directed to their location without noting the discrepancies or were ignored. The subject in school attire was passed by a group of staff, who looked at her with curiosity but did not stop her. The subjects walked repeatedly passed multiple staff members during the study and were never stopped. As an additional concern, the students

who were out of class conducting the study and shadowing the subjects were never questioned about why they were not in class.

The subject in civilian clothes was stopped first by a staff member after the first scheduled break. He was asked if he was a student or needing more information for one of the programs, and asked if he had a visitor's badge. He was quickly escorted to the front desk. The subject in school attire was stopped looking at her checklist and the information posted around campus. She was directed to locations several times without being stopped. She was finally stopped due to her shoes and not having a badge. The same staff member stopped both test subjects. Additionally, one of the instructors emailed campus administration after noticing the subject in civilian clothes walking around outside the classroom.

One option to increase security is to institute parking permits. Having these permits would provide limited access to the parking lot area. The first permit would be provided free of charge to the student upon enrollment, with the student providing a valid ID. If the parking permit was lost or damaged, the replacement fee would be five dollars. Money from the parking permits would be used for student activities.

Another option to improve parking lot safety is to install speed bumps. Employees of nearby businesses, as well as students, cut through the parking lot at high speeds. Using speed bumps would slow down cars entering the parking area, hopefully preventing future property damage to cars that are parked. In addition, the speed bumps will slow traffic through the parking lot, improving safety for those walking to and from the building.

One way to address building security is through a keyless entry system. To gain access to the campus, student, faculty, and staff would need to swipe their ID badge to open the door. Each badge would have a chip that allowed access. Each card is issued independently, and each

individual receives an identification number in the system. Based on the individual's role, access to the building can be customized. The benefit of this system is that it tracks access to the building and the dates and times of entry. If the badge is lost, stolen, or damaged by the individual, he or she must pay a ten dollar replacement fee. Badges that do not work due to technical issues would be replaced free of charge. An additional benefit of this system is that it can track a student's current status and automatically deny entry for withdrawn and graduate students.

Cameras and video surveillance provide additional safety inside and outside the building. Cameras provide additional security by documenting what happens. Cameras in the parking lot would provide evidence for property damage, violence, and theft claims. The sight of cameras lowers the risk of individuals committing crimes and provides a sense of safety. These cameras can also monitor student behavior by documenting tardiness, students leaving early, and other concerns, which can be used together with the keyless entry system as documentation. If a stranger were to come on property, these cameras would provide documentation of who they are and their vehicle. They could also identify who this person associates with and allow faster identification of the individual.

Cameras inside the campus would show where in the building an individual goes, as well as documenting any instances of theft. This system would also help administration identify the location of unknown individuals quickly within the building. The campus has expensive equipment that is costly to replace if stolen and might be a danger to others if it were in the wrong hands. Cameras in the laboratory can also identify and document any accidents or injuries, as well as stolen equipment. If documentation of these events is not available, it is impossible to prove they happened. An added benefit to a camera system is that it would lower

overall insurance premiums. Cameras would reduce the investigation time when incidents occurred.

The cost of installing a camera system is actually less than most people would think. Depending on which system is purchased, several cost effective options are available. For example, the IP System is available for between \$800 and \$1,000, depending on options. For \$450, the campus could install two cameras on the outside. This would also include a \$168 equipment charge and between \$260 to \$340 for installation. This would provide basic system functions on the cameras. If the campus wanted to expand to cover the entire campus, it would be between \$875 and \$1,000. This system allows monitoring from the internet and cell phones. Additionally, the campus could upgrade the system for an additional \$500.

Another option to increase inside security would be to have a day-shift security guard. The evening classes have a security guard, but this is not provided during the day. A security guard on campus during the day provides additional security and back-up. This person could also facilitate handling complaints. Overall, providing a day security guard would enforce all school policies, including dress code and ID badges. Depending on the company, a daytime security guard contract could be as little as ten dollars per hour.

An additional option for inside security would be to provide a panic button. If an individual came into the building and was aggressive or violent, the front desk could call for help without alerting this individual. This could also be added to classrooms to provide additional help for students and faculty. Further, having a button in the laboratories would allow for immediate response to emergencies.

In closing, the security of Anthem College is a legitimate concern for students, faculty, and staff. Having effective security measures in place reduces concerns for everyone on campus.

Balancing inside and outside security creates a safe environment and reduces the risk of property damage, theft, and personal harm. While the specific measures necessary for this campus are subject to interpretation, there is no doubt that addressing these issues will create a safer, happier college environment.

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