

# DRILL: Campus utilizes homeland security drill to practice emergency procedures

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Photo courtesy of STEVEN HEVNER

Law enforcement officials prepare on campus at the Educational Activities Building for the drill exercises at Harrisburg International Airport.

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Nearby, Homeland Security and the South Central Pennsylvania Task Force were holding full scale exercises complete with actors in active shooter, hostage, explosives, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism scenarios, according to Chief Kevin Stoehr of Police Services. Though PSH was not included in the Homeland Security drills, campus leaders and departments believed it provided a great opportunity to test their emergency response procedures and crisis communications, Stoehr said.

Hevner explained that the campus had tests before, but the practice drills were the campus's first "intensive self-test."

Crisis communications tested during the two days included e-mail alerts, the PSUTXT system and broadcast voicemail messages sent to campus offices, said Stoehr. A problem discovered in the communications test was that

the test messages sent through the PSUTXT system were too long, he said. Two more text messages later, a complete practice drill alert was successfully sent.

No other problems were discovered in the communications test, Stoehr reported.

On Friday, Oct. 17, Police Services officers and Physical Plant employees stopped vehicles and pedestrians at all four entrances to the campus, checking IDs and informing students and faculty of the practice drills. Stoehr, who considered the drill successful, estimated about 1,100 vehicles were stopped during the campus practice drill between 9:40 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Members of PSH's Critical Incident Response Team also discussed emergency procedures including closings and evacuation, said Stoehr. The campus is planning to install a public announcement system throughout campus, and numbering the doors of the Olmsted building in the

event law enforcement officials unfamiliar with the campus are responding, he added.

The first two days of three-day drill involving Homeland Security and the South Central Pennsylvania Task Force took place at Three Mile Island and Harrisburg International Airport, said Stoehr. According to Lt. William Gelgot of Police Services, approximately 300 law enforcement officials from local counties, state and federal departments were involved. Specialized teams included a bomb squad, hazmat and SERT and SWAT teams, Gelgot added.

PSH's Educational Activities Building was the staging area for the drill at HIA, said Stoehr.

"In today's world, if there was a true incident, we would want to notify the community before a person finds out through someone else," said Stoehr. "The drill was important because it shows the campus, 'Hey, we're trying to do something.'"

## Crime statistics report released, do not necessarily reflect safety on campus

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In September, Penn State Harrisburg released its annual crime statistics report in compliance with the federal Clery Act. The Policies, Safety & U report includes statistics concerning on-campus and surrounding neighborhood crimes.

The report is broken down into part one offenses which are felonies and part two offenses which are misdemeanors. Last year, there were 18 incidents of theft making it the most serious part one offense reported. Theft has increased in the previous two years. In 2005 and 2006 there were only 14 actual offenses for each year, and no arrests were made for any of the thefts over the past three years.

The second most serious part one offense reported last year with the highest increase was burglary. According to the report, there were five accounts of forcible entry and four arrests were made. Burglary has gone up compared to 2005 and 2006 where zero incidents occurred.

There were also no arrests made for the nine accounts of

vandalism, which was the most serious part two offense reported last year. Vandalism has tripled in the last three years, and was also the highest increase overall of part two crimes. In 2005 there were three actual offenses with no arrest and no offenses occurred in 2006.

The Number of liquor law violations went down substantially compare to the previous two years. Last year, there were no offenses. In 2005, there were 10 offenses with 10 arrests and in 2006 there were 12 offenses and 12 arrests.

Last year there were 27 part one offenses and 38 part two offenses. The PSH Police Services makes effort to try to prevent crime. Chief of Police, Kevin J. Stoehr said, "Crime is basically desire and opportunity. You have those two things. If someone has the desire to commit a crime it's hard to stop that. We can stop the opportunities for crime to occur."

The PSH Police Services lists ways to prevent crime on its Web site. Also emphasized is high visibility on its part. The Police Services try to engage with faculty, students, and staff. Stoehr said, "People see police, they see police cars driving,

officers walking around that can affect whether they're going to commit a crime or not."

Some students question the presence and "high visibility" of the PSH Police Department.

Andrew Lehmann, 19, who is from Philadelphia and currently lives on campus, concluded that security on campus is a complete myth. He does not believe in it, but he does feel safe. Lehmann said, "I feel safe but I feel safe because of myself not because the policies. Basically if you give the impression that you can get something stolen from you then you should in turn get something stolen from you. So handle yourself or things can happen."

Communications major, Gunnar Wray, 26, who lives off campus in Harrisburg, has not been too concerned with security on campus. He does not have any classes this semester where he is worried about walking to his car at 10 p.m. at night. So far he has seen police give speeding tickets to students, and one officer buy a cup of coffee. Otherwise, he has not seen an "everyday presence" of Police Services. For Wray, "Security hasn't really been a concern of mine as of yet. I guess it's kind of ignorant because something really really bad could

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happen."

Andrea Harvey, 19, Secondary Education English Major, from Middletown does not see campus security often either, but she thinks that might be a good thing. She said, "They kinda let things be. They don't get in your way. I think they're doing a good job."

Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, James M. Ruiz, Ph.D. also thinks Police Services is doing a good job. He said, "I seem to think the campus police do a good job. They're somewhat invisible while being visible at the same time."

Programs are also provided by the PSH Police Services to help keep students safe and aide in being proactive in the effort to prevent crime. A shuttle is available for students to take them Village of Pineford in Middletown and Willow Gardens in Highspire so they do not have to walk home. Police Services also offers an escort service for students on campus late at night. Using the escort service is only a phone call to Police Services. Offers are there to escort students

to wherever they need to go.

Statistics only report so much about crime. There is room for error. Not all crimes committed are reported, the crimes that are reported may not be reported accurately and only the most serious crime is reported. Stoehr pointed out that statistics can be manipulated and under reported. It is possible that Universities can report a more serious offense like a burglary as a part one crime, which is a felony as a Stolen Property incident which is a part two crime, which is only a misdemeanor. In result, a university may report no felonies, when in actuality, there were felonies, but it was reported as a misdemeanor instead. Stoehr made it clear that Penn State Harrisburg reports the crime statistics as it is.

Ruiz said, "When you look at the overall statistics nationally there's more crime that occurs than what is reported. To say that is happening on this campus, with any seriousness that appears to be a concern to the students, I would say no."