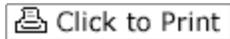


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As Michigan students begin filing onto campus, they'll return to a new environment that will include more security, more campus communication and, hopefully, no repeat of the carnage at Virginia Tech that shocked the country.

Administrators throughout the state and country have worked to ensure their campuses are prepared to meet violence in the wake of the shootings April 16 in which 33 died.

"After the Virginia Tech incident, you had to ask yourself: If that happened here, could we respond?" said Tony Holt, police chief at Wayne State University.

Wayne State campus officials sought to answer that question by organizing a training exercise that included multiple "shooters" and several wounded and dead students.

Although the shooters at State Hall on Friday were actors, the reality for campus police was clear: Make sure they know how to handle complex, potentially violent situations so everyone feels comfortable on campus.

"This is a safe place," Holt said before the training exercise. "We want to show them that."

Other campus leaders have reviewed their emergency management plans and looked to make improvements.

"We've been pretty much in high gear," said Rich Morrison, spokesman for Central Michigan University.

"We're looking at all of our policies that have to do with health and safety."

Central is installing phones in 315 classrooms and has increased the frequency of meetings designed to discuss potential problems with students and staff. It intends to add speakers to the campus's emergency phones so they can broadcast alerts.

And, like the University of Michigan and others, Central is also looking at ways to send instant campus messages in case of an emergency.

#### Emergency systems in place

At Wayne State and Michigan State, such systems are in place. On Friday, just moments after Janae King ran out of State Hall as a volunteer victim, she got a text message: "Active shooter inside State Hall."

If it were a real message, King knows what her reaction would be. "I'd be scared, but at least I'd know what's going on," said King, 20, of Southfield.

At Wayne State, more than 15,000 students and staff have signed up for instant alerts via cell phone text messages. Thousands more have asked for the information via e-mail or instant message. At Michigan State, students will be notified next week that they can sign up for the text messages, as can their parents.

"People are glad to know such a system is available to them," said Sgt. Florene McGlothian-Taylor, spokeswoman for the MSU police.

Security has always been a concern for campus leaders as they assure parents that their children are safe.

"The No. 1 issue with parents was safety," Morrison said, referring to a poll of parents conducted for Central in 2006, well before the Virginia Tech incident.

Crime on Michigan's campuses has been stable in recent years. But a murder-rape at Eastern Michigan University in December triggered outrage because most of the campus didn't learn about the crime until the suspect was arrested in February.

#### Changes implemented

Eastern has since implemented changes that include a new warning system.

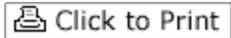
Campus officials caution, however, that they can't prevent every possible scenario.

"Learning cannot take place in an environment where people don't feel safe," Morrison said. "But no one can 100 percent guarantee 100 percent safety 100 percent of the time."

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