RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
TRAINING FACULTY TO IDENTIFY
AT RISK STUDENTS

Since the Virginia Tech tragedy in April 2007, the issue of how to identify at-risk students has been discussed across the country. The issue was also discussed by the Gubernatorial Task Force on University Campus Safety.

One of the Task Force assessments was:

Greater information sharing should take place both on campus and with local authorities, especially when a student is seen to be at risk. Organizational and legal barriers which impede the flow of necessary information must be removed. Campuses should implement programs of awareness and education relating to mental health and campus safety which target faculty, staff, students, and parents.

The Task Force recommended:

That each Florida college and university develop, promulgate, and market a campus-specific, multi-media awareness training program for faculty, staff, students, and parents. The program should include recognition of early warning signs of emotional crisis and methods of notification of appropriate campus authorities. Completion of this program should be required for all staff and faculty, including adjunct instructors.

Clearly, faculty and others who interact with students daily can be part of redundant methods employed within the State University System of Florida (SUS) to identify students who are at risk and direct those students to appropriate resources and office on their campuses. (Refer to the final report of the Mental Health Issues Subcommittee, *The Mental Health Continuum of Care and Related Legal Issues in the SUS*.)

Governor Arlen Chase, at the request of Chair of the Board of Governors (BOG) Emergency Preparedness and Campus Safety Task Force, chaired a committee on training faculty. BOG Academic and Student Affairs Staff's research provided the attached list of resources (Attachment 1) that may be used to train faculty on how to identify students who may be at risk. BOG Staff also determined that resources are available within the SUS that may be utilized by faculty including the online training tool developed by the Office of the Vice Provost at the University of Central Florida: http://vpaa.ucf.edu/classroom_security.ppt

Another tool that may be utilized is a video created by a faculty member at Florida International University. Entitled "Loners Not Losers," the film was developed in response to the events at Columbine and Virginia Tech. It sends a message to students about depression, isolation and violence as well as other issues that could convey mental health challenges. It portrays examples of students who may be lost on various levels on campus and could be experiencing challenges adjusting to campus life or issues that occur in their personal lives while off campus.

The ultimate goal in using any of these resources is to better equip faculty on how to identify and refer SUS students who may need assistance. In seeking to identify students who may need assistance, care needs to be exercised in insuring that cultural backgrounds are not presumed to predispose a student to being more likely to engage in at-risk behaviors.

Recommendations:
1. Request the endorsement of the Advisory Council for Faculty Senate (ACFS) to encourage their colleagues to attend and participate in orientation sessions or departmental meetings that focus on equipping faculty with tools to identify students at risk.

2. Request the ACFS to review resources that may be utilized by faculty to identify at risk students and make its recommendations to the BOG.

3. Request that each SUS Provost work with ACFS to schedule training meetings on their respective campuses to use resources when identified.

4. Encourage the development of a tutorial that can be utilized with "Loners Not Losers" to assist with the orientation and training sessions of faculty on identifying students at risk.

SELECT RESOURCES FOR TRAINING FACULTY TO
IDENTIFY AT-RISK STUDENTS

Post-Virginia Tech reports with training information:

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities – *Balancing Student Privacy, Campus Security, and Public Safety: Issues for Campus Leaders* http://www.aascu.org/media/pdf/08_perspectives.pdf

- Virginia Tech Review Panel: *Report of the Review Panel* http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport.cfm

- Association of American Universities – *Survey on Safety on AAU Campuses after the Virginia Tech Shootings* (Only available with AAU membership.)

SUS representatives recommended the faculty guides at the following institutions as being good resources:

- Binghamton University http://counseling.binghamton.edu/facultyg.htm

- Adelphi University http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/scc/fac_guide/

- Cal State Long Beach http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students2/caps/facultyguide.htm