

Safety and Support for Students, Faculty and Staff

Threat Assessment Team

Student Assistance & Support

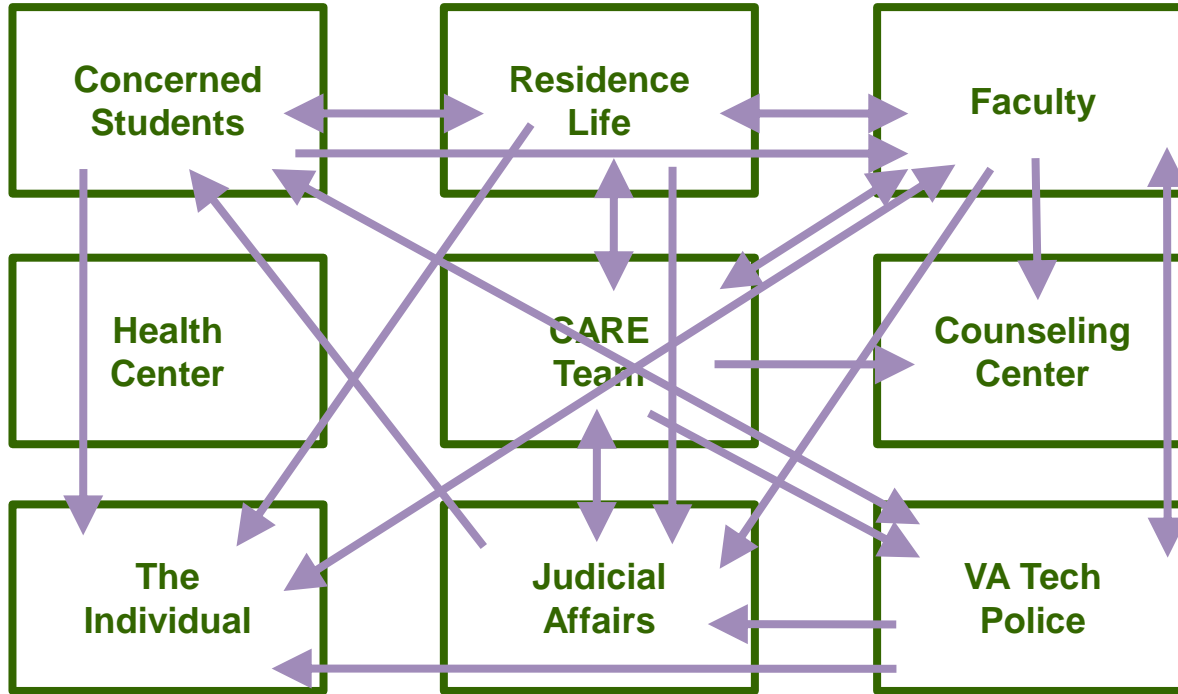
Dean of Students Office



Dean of Students Office

- Dr. Reuban Rodriguez, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Students
- Kendall Plageman, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
- Lisa Mathews-Ailsworth, Advisor





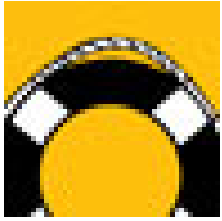
SOURCE: OIG Report #140-07: Investigation of the April 16, 2007 Critical Incident at Virginia Tech. Prepared by: Office of the Inspector General for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services – Commonwealth of Virginia

Two Teams: SAS and TAT

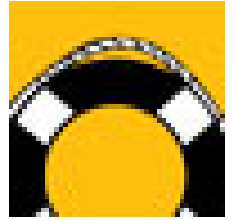
- The university operates two interdisciplinary teams of university officials that assess, respond, and manage issues of concern involving students, faculty or staff.
- The Student Assistance & Support Team (SAS) primarily addresses students exhibiting behavioral or mental health concerns who do not pose a risk of harm to others; whereas the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) addresses high-risk concerns involving any member of the VCU community.

Why Report a Concern to Dean of Students office?

- **Early intervention means rapid solutions:** Often, a quick response to provide a distressed student with timely resources will ensure that the student remains successful academically. Late intervention often involves missed classes, isolation from friends and family, possible withdrawals or late drops and an overall interruption in the student's experience.
- **Connecting the Dots:** Our office receives reports from all over campus. Our ability to connect your concerns with the concerns of others means we are able to provide a greater level of support for each student involved. When putting together a puzzle, every piece of information matters.
- **#VeryCaringU:** Making a referral shows that you care enough to get the student the help he or she needs. It means you are not prepared to let a student fall through the cracks.
- **It Might Be Required:** Under certain circumstances, faculty, staff, and students are obligated to report acts of violence and other threatening behaviors.



Reporting Concerns



Report non-emergency concerns to the Dean of Students Office:

[Online Report Form](#)
www.go.vcu.edu/safety
vcudean@vcu.edu
(804) 828-8940

Consult with your academic dean's office as appropriate.

Report emergencies to VCU Police at 828-1234.

When should you be concerned?

University faculty and staff play a central role in creating a caring, supportive environment for students and the VCU community. You are often in an excellent position to provide information and assistance to students in distress. You are NOT in a position to provide personal counseling to students; however, you can play an important role in encouraging students to use campus resources and bringing concerns to the attention of university officials.

Distress

- Negative reactions to current stressors.
- Warning signs: major changes in behavior, appearance, mood; isolation, report of stressful event(s)
- May warrant intervention

Crisis

- Negative, overwhelming reaction to stressors that exceeds ability to cope.
- Warning signs: expressions of suicidal or homicidal thoughts, violent or threatening behavior, psychotic behavior
- Warrants immediate intervention

If a student is in distress, what do I do?

- Provide support, talk to them directly about the concern.
- Talk to them about resources (Counseling Services, Student Health, Dean of Students Office, Equity and Access Services)
- You CAN offer to walk them to Counseling Services (VMI Building, 4th floor)
- However – maintain a clear boundary – your role is to support them in getting the resources and support they need – not in solving the problem or being their sole source of support. Be frank about your own limits of time, training, and objectivity.
- Submit a lifebuoy report or contact Dean of Students office (www.go.vcu.edu/safety).

If a student is in crisis, what do I do?

- This requires intervention involving campus resources outside of yourself. A student in crisis is NEVER a situation that you should be handling alone.
- Options:
 - Walk them to Counseling Services directly
 - Call VCU Police at 828-1234 to escort them to Counseling Services (or the hospital, if need be)
 - Safety is top priority: Your safety, Student safety, Campus Community safety

The Gray Area

What if you're not sure?

- Talk with your supervisor
- Call the counseling center at 828-6200 and ask to speak with an available therapist – they will make a recommendation
- Call the Dean of Students Office at 828-8940
- If an emergency, call VCUPD at 828-1234

Confidentiality

- **Legitimate Educational Interest:** Student educational records can be disclosed to university officials whom the institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests – meaning they need this information to adequately perform their job functions and duties.
- **Personal observations:** FERPA does NOT prohibit university officials from disclosing information about a student that is obtained through personal knowledge or observation.
- **Health and Safety exception:** FERPA does not prohibit the sharing of information from a student's educational record, if knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or others. FERPA authorizes university officials to release such information to parents, police or others whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or others.



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