

RESPONSES TO STUDENT PROTEST

JULY 9-10, 2012

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

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Item 4.9

Issue

Within the past year, there have been unfortunate uses of pepper spray at student demonstrations at the University of California, Davis and Santa Monica Community College. The board has expressed a desire to discuss whether they should provide direction to districts or otherwise become involved in these issues.

Background

The political protests that have occurred across the world in the last year present the opportunity to reflect on the California Community Colleges' role in preserving free speech and academic freedom. The California Community Colleges must remain committed to ensuring a place for civil discourse, freedom of expression, and non-violence as core values of colleges and universities. Additionally, our college communities must continue to work together to discuss important topics in a place of mutual respect, safety, and tolerance. However, it is important to note that responsibility for managing these issues rests squarely with local community college districts. Districts have processes for controlling demonstrations that must be in compliance with well-established legal principles concerning free speech and assembly. Furthermore, districts have responsibility for public safety and security on their campuses.

While recognizing that this is primarily a local issue, the Chancellor's Office through the Disaster Resistant California Community Colleges Project, has worked to support and advise college administrators and law enforcement on effective protest management practices. This work has been funded for the past several years using federal funds distributed by the California Emergency Management Agency.

Two presentations on nonviolent protests in the community college setting were given in partnership with the Community College League of California. The first was at the league's conference for northern CEOs (March 2012) and the second was at its conference for trustees (May 2012). Approximately 30 participants attended each presentation. A tool kit for protest management has been added to the Chancellor's Office Disaster Resistant California Community Colleges Project website (<http://emergency.cccco.edu>). This page displays contact information for subject matter experts, handouts that were offered at presentations and a link to the University of California Office of the President's draft of their report on responses to protests on University of California campuses.

Kim Aufhauser of West Valley College, Campus Safety Supervisor Lloyd Jackson of Yosemite Community College District, and Police Chief Ken Arnold of Napa Valley College attended a weeklong training course on field force operations at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL, and they now serve as subject matter experts for other California community colleges. The cost of the training and travel to the Center for Domestic Preparedness were covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This course provided information on managing incidents involving civil disorder. Participants practiced activities including mass arrest procedures, team tactics, demonstrator tactics, crowd dynamics and mob behavior, use of riot control agents and less lethal munitions, and the employment of personal protective equipment.

Following clashes between police and demonstrators on several University of California campuses, The University of California President's Office recently released a draft report on appropriate responses to protests on college and university campuses. The draft report identified best practices in managing protests and gives a series of recommendations that clarified the role of administration, public safety, and the entire campus community in responding to or participating in protests including acts of civil disobedience. The final report is expected to be released at the end of June 2012 after comments are reviewed.

Conclusion

This item is for information only.