REPORT OF THE
CAMPUS SECURITY COMMISSION
to the
RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF
GOVERNORS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Table of Contents
Executive Summary ................................................................. pg. 1
1.0 Introduction – Genesis of the Commission ................................ pg. 6
2.0 Membership of the Commission ............................................. pg. 6
3.0 Charge to the Commission ..................................................... pg. 7
4.0 Actions of the Commission ..................................................... pg. 7
5.0 Past Studies of This Issue ....................................................... pg. 8
6.0 Data Review ........................................................................ pg. 9
7.0 Campus Police at the Public Institutions of Higher Education ...... pg. 10
8.0 Views of the Presidents ........................................................ pg. 11
8.1 - Robert Carothers, URI ........................................................ pg. 11
8.2 - Ray M. Di Pasquale, CCRI ...................................................... pg. 12
8.3 - Nancy Carriuolo, RIC .......................................................... pg. 13
9.0 Other Security Measures in Existence at the Institutions ............... pg. 14
9.1 - Counseling Centers ............................................................. pg. 14
9.2 - Cameras/Surveillance ............................................................ pg. 15
9.3 - Blue Light Alarms ................................................................. pg. 15
9.4 - Building Lock Downs ............................................................ pg. 15
9.5 - Emergency Notification ....................................................... pg. 16
9.6 - Incident Response ............................................................... pg. 16
9.7 - Additional Training ............................................................. pg. 16
9.8 - Other .............................................................................. pg. 17
10.0 Result of the Open Forums ..................................................... pg. 17
11.0 Cost of Arming ..................................................................... pg. 19
11.1- Psychological Evaluations ..................................................... pg. 19
11.2- Equipment ...................................................................... pg. 19
11.3- Equipment Storage ............................................................. pg. 19
11.4- Police Cars ...................................................................... pg. 19
11.5-Training ........................................................................... pg. 20
11.6-Estimated Cost per Institution ................................................. pg. 21
12.0 Lethal vs. Less-than-Lethal Weapons ..................................... pg. 21
13.0 Human Resource Issues ........................................................ pg. 21
14.0 Insurance Issues .................................................................. pg. 22
15.0 Faculty, Staff or Students Rights/Privacy Issues ......................... pg. 22
16.0 Recommendations of the Commission ................................... pg. 22
17.0 Appendices ........................................................................ pg. 25
Executive Summary
The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) formed a Campus Security Commission (CSC) in 2008 to study the question of whether or not the campus police at one or more of Rhode Island’s three institutions of public higher education should be armed. In response to one of the key questions contained in the charge to the CSC ("What circumstances, if any, have changed since the issue of whether or not campus police should be armed was last studied by the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education in 2000?") members of the Commission agreed that a great deal has changed since that time. Certainly, the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath have greatly affected everyday life in America. The catastrophic and tragic events of 9/11 have brought numerous changes to the way Americans live, the protocols they now follow and the increased security presence that has permeated everyday life in this country since that day. (For example, many high schools in Rhode Island and elsewhere have had armed municipal police officers within their buildings on a daily basis for the last several years.)

Life on college campuses has changed as well. While the students, faculty, administration and staff of every college in America have had to adapt to changes brought about by the events of 9/11, far too many campuses have also seen their own tragic and catastrophic events over the last decade. These include the killing of 32 people by a lone, mentally-disturbed student gunman at Virginia Tech University in 2007, the shooting of eight people at Northern Illinois University in 2008 and several shootings in 2009 including a shooting of three people by a professor at the University of Georgia and the shooting of a female student at a Wesleyan University bookstore.

However, many college campuses are actually safer now than they were ten years ago. The above examples notwithstanding, the total number of campus crimes - especially violent crimes - has not increased at all in recent years. In addition, many campuses have benefited from the development and installation of a variety of systems and features designed to enhance campus security, including state-of-the-art security cameras, the proliferation of blue-light emergency stations, emergency notification systems and several others.

Rhode Island’s public institutions of higher education have followed this trend. The University of Rhode Island, in particular, has invested a considerable amount of study, time and resources in security cameras, enhanced lighting, blue-light emergency stations and an emergency notification system. (After its own study of security issues and the report of its ad hoc task force in 2002, URI also took a number of steps to increase the professionalism of its campus police and security officers. These included significant reorganization and professional development; increasing the size and certification of the staff; implementing a number of cooperative efforts with student organizations; and sharpening unarmed officers’ communication skills in addressing and minimizing potentially dangerous situations.)

Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island also have emergency notification systems and RIC has a number of blue-light emergency stations. However, both of the latter two institutions have enjoyed fewer resources to work with than the University and their security systems are not as advanced. In addition, the fiscal challenges of recent years have forced all three institutions to decrease staffing levels and some of this has had a detrimental effect on campus security. (Neither Rhode Island College nor CCRI, for example, have full-time police
dispatchers so several on-duty personnel are forced to work from a desk to handle dispatch duties instead of being out on patrol around the campuses.)

The CSC reviewed reports of criminal incidents from all three institutions over a three-year period and was satisfied that crime is not a major problem at any one of them. However, there is a fair level of concern about problems and issues related to mental illness, which has increased both nationally as well as locally. (According to a March 2009 letter to members of the CSC from Dr. Robert M. Samuels, director of the URI Counseling Center, a 2007 survey of University and College Counseling Center directors confirms this. The majority of directors reported significant increases in the number of students coming to college being prescribed psychotropic medication, as well as those presenting with severe psychological problems.) Some of this increase can no doubt be attributed to increased diagnoses of various types of mental illness due to more and better access to care and counseling. Some of it is also linked to behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse. Whatever the reasons are for the increase, Rhode Island’s college campuses appear to be dealing with more students who have mental health issues than they were ten years ago.

As a result of this, URI, RIC and CCRI have, to varying degrees, worked to increase the resources and capabilities of their counseling centers. All three institutions conduct some type of training for faculty and staff on how to recognize erratic or troublesome behavior and signs of mental illness among students, and have established protocols on how faculty and staff should respond if they recognize a student in distress.

Dr. Samuels’ letter also mentioned the “Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy” (June 13, 2007). In that report, mental health experts across the country pointed out that, “Most people who are violent do not have a mental illness and most people who have a mental illness are not violent.”

CSC members learned that campus police at URI, RIC and CCRI must rely and depend on the response from local municipal law enforcement for situations involving weapons. As unarmed first responders, campus police at all three institutions would be placed in a very dangerous situation if they had to respond to a call involving a weapon, including that of an active shooter. The most they can and should do in their present capacity is handle perimeter control and assist in information gathering.

While the presidents and campus security directors of each institution expressed to the CSC their appreciation for the assistance of local municipal law enforcement and proclaimed satisfaction with their response time to date, the CSC is concerned that a local city or town police department might not be able to respond quickly enough should a potentially dangerous situation involving a weapon take place on one of Rhode Island’s public campuses.

The CSC also acknowledged that the construction and operation of the Ryan Center and the Boss Arena at URI have led to an increased number of events at that institution which attract individuals from off campus to Kingston. This has led to increased risk and the need for additional security at the University. Non-students accounted for 39% of all campus arrests in 2008.
The CSC met nine times from August of 2008 through June of 2009. It heard from a variety of individuals including all three system presidents, former Commissioner Jack R. Warner, Colonel Mark Porter, head of the Brown University campus police, and various other officials at one or more of the institutions. The CSC’s study of the issue has led it to make the following recommendations to the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education:

1. The RIBGHE and the Commissioner of Higher Education should work with the three system presidents to address ongoing and overall security and risk management issues on each of their campuses. The CSC would like to see each president work with the appropriate individuals at his/her institution to prepare a list of priority needs and items that are deemed necessary and critical to better safety and security on their campus whether those items are equipment-based, of a policy nature or personnel-oriented. Each president should also prepare a cost estimate for these items. The CSC recommends that the RIBGHE then hold a detailed conversation with each president as to that president’s views regarding what is best done to improve the safety/security of their institution.

2. The RIBGHE should also ask each president to assess the means and capabilities of their campus counseling centers for dealing with faculty, students and/or staff who may have mental health issues. In particular, the CSC recommends that each campus counseling center be provided with enough human and financial resources so as to be able to conduct training sessions for all faculty, staff and students on how to recognize individuals who are exhibiting signs of mental illness and how best to react and respond in such situations. The CSC further recommends that such training sessions should be mandated for all campus police and campus security personnel at each institution.

3. While there was not unanimous agreement among members of the CSC on the question of arming campus police, there was consensus that the RIBGHE should seriously consider developing a plan to properly and correctly arm campus police at one or more of its public institutions of higher education. The same sentiment was voiced by the presidents of all three institutions in their interviews with the CSC.

The CSC defines “properly and correctly” as follows:

- Complete and proper training, including psychological examinations for each and every campus police officer, prior to the appearance of any armed campus police on any campus;
- Consultation with the Rhode Island State Police as to the standard for complete and proper training; who would conduct the training; how, when and where it would be conducted; the cost of such training; and what training would necessary on an annual and ongoing basis for any officers who might carry weapons on campus;
- RIBGHE commitment to fully fund the cost of all necessary training, both initial and ongoing, as well as the cost of all necessary equipment and facilities required to properly implement and introduce an armed campus police force to any college community where the RIBGHE might deem their introduction necessary;
-4-

- Ongoing dialogue with the administration, faculty, staff and students of each institution concerning any Board decision to arm campus police at that institution. Although the CSC did conduct one open forum meeting at each institution (two at URI), this is probably not sufficient. If the RIBGHE decides to arm campus police at one or more institutions, it needs to work with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the three system presidents to discuss how that decision is best communicated to each campus community. There needs to be dialogue with a variety of constituencies within each campus community to allow for questions to be raised and addressed prior to the appearance of armed police officers on that campus.

- Development of a timetable as to when armed campus police might appear on a campus. If the RIBGHE decides to move forward with arming its campus police, the CSC recommends it develop a timetable in consultation with the Rhode Island State Police as to how much time would be necessary and appropriate to design, develop and complete the training, purchase of equipment and installation of any necessary facilities so that one or more of the institutions can plan for the first appearance of armed campus police on their respective campus.

4. Whether or not the RIBGHE decides to arm campus police at one or more of its institutions, the CSC recommends that every campus police officer at each institution undergo training in issues dealing with cultural sensitivity, diversity, issue identification and resolution. The demographics of our campuses have changed in the last decade and will continue to change in the years ahead. The sometimes controversial relationship between law enforcement officials at all levels – including campus police – and communities of color require outreach, dialogue and training to combat misperceptions and stereotyping by any of the parties involved. As one CSC member stated, “It is naïve to believe that students who come from communities where negative relationships with police are real and/or perceived will not be impacted by the introduction of weapons on campus.”

The CSC is cognizant that, at the time of its study, Rhode Island was one of only two states (Oregon was the other one) without an armed campus police presence at its public institutions of higher education. As such, the CSC is concerned about liability issues which the RIBGHE might face if there were to be an incident on one of its campuses.

The CSC also recognizes that significant work has been undertaken in recent years to develop campus cultures of nonviolence and peaceful resolutions to conflict. The Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at URI is a prime example of this work.

The CSC understands that Rhode Island’s public higher education system has faced especially difficult financial times in recent years, having lost over $33 million in state appropriation since the end of fiscal 2006. It also understands that the cost of the training, equipment and facilities involved in the arming of campus police is significant and would be an additional burden to the system. However, the CSC believes that funding should not be the primary determinant in the Board’s decision of whether or not to arm the campus police. The desire to provide its officers with the proper training and tools so that campus police as first responders would be better protected and able to respond with appropriate force if the need arose to deal with an assailant with
a deadly weapon should be considered equally with funding concerns. The CSC emphasizes that unless the RIBGHE is committed and able to find a way to address the economic costs necessary to properly and correctly train and arm its campus police then arming should not be pursued at this time.

Finally, the CSC recognizes that the recommendations contained in this report are advisory in nature and that the ultimate decision on this issue rests with the RIBGHE.
1.0 – Introduction - Genesis of the Commission

In February 2007, a lone student gunman killed 32 people including students and faculty members at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, VA. Two months after the shootings, Governor Donald L. Carcieri ordered a review of safety/security procedures on the campuses of the three public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island. One month later, officials from each of Rhode Island’s eleven institutions of higher education, public and private, began a series of meetings to share information and ideas about how their respective campuses might review and upgrade security procedures. Throughout the summer and into the fall of 2007, officials continued to meet and a number of campuses moved to upgrade existing emergency alert and notification systems or to put systems in place where none had existed previously.

In February 2008, ten months after the Virginia Tech shootings and just a few months after five students were killed in shootings at Northern Illinois University, legislation was introduced in the Rhode Island General Assembly which would have mandated the arming of campus police at the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island. (The House legislation was 2008 H-8059 and the Senate legislation was 2008 S-2723.) The RIBGHE testified against this legislation. In their testimony, the RIBGHE stated that they were opposed to an authority currently under their jurisdiction being dictated by statute. (RIGL 16-52-2 states that campus police at the public institutions of higher education should not be armed without the approval of the RIBGHE.) The RIBGHE also expressed its opposition to a series of measures spelled out in the legislation that would have required a significant expenditure on the part of the public higher education system without the provision of any funding stream to cover that expense, especially during a period of significant budget cuts to the system. In their testimony, the RIBGHE said they would form a study commission of their own to review the issue in detail and report back to the General Assembly. They asked the Assembly to hold these bills until their study was complete.

The General Assembly acceded to the RIBGHE’s request and the legislation did not pass out of either the Senate or House committees to which it had been assigned.

2.0 - Membership of the Commission

Shortly thereafter, the RIBGHE formed the Campus Security Commission (CSC). The following individuals were named to the CSC by the respective presidents of each institution:

**University of Rhode Island**
- Abu Bakr, Executive Assistant to the President
- Leo Carroll, Professor of Sociology/Anthropology
- Major Steven Baker, URI Police Department
Rhode Island College
- Cy Cote, Chief of Campus Police
- Paul Forte, Assistant Vice President for Finance & Controller

Community College of Rhode Island
- Ron Schertz, Associate Vice President for Student Services
- Richard Robinson, Acting Director of Campus Police

At the request of then-Commissioner of Higher Education Jack R. Warner, the Rhode Island State Police named its Tactical Team Commander, Lieutenant James Manni and the Office of the Attorney General named Deputy Attorney General Gerald Coyne to the CSC.

Commissioner Warner named then-Associate Commissioner J.R. Pagliarini to chair the CSC and assigned Associate Commissioner Steven J. Maurano as staff.

3.0 - Charge to the Commission

The CSC was charged with studying the question of what circumstances, if any, had changed since the RIBGHE last studied the issue of arming campus police in 2000. They were also asked, if any changes had taken place since then, were those changes substantive enough to recommend that the RIBGHE consider arming the campus police at the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and/or the Community College of Rhode Island?

The CSC was asked to consider what scope and type of training might be needed – both initial and ongoing – if arming were to be recommended. They were asked to consider the cost of such training as well as the cost for the purchase and proper storage of any necessary equipment associated with arming campus police. They were asked to review insurance, legal and human resource issues that would need to be part of such a decision. They were tasked with looking into any necessary or desirable certification and/or accreditation issues associated with arming. They were asked to consider whether less-than-lethal weapons might be a viable option for campus police. And finally, they were asked to consider the rights and/or privacy issues of faculty, staff and students at the three public institutions of higher education.

4.0 - Actions of the Commission

The CSC met nine times from August of 2008 through June of 2009. Among the people who met with the commission as they explored the issues were:

- Jack R. Warner, then-Commissioner of Higher Education
- Colonel Mark J. Porter, head of the Brown University police force (Brown University has the only armed police force at a college or university in the state of Rhode Island.)
- Then-URI President Robert L. Carothers
- Rhode Island College President Nancy Carriuolo
- Community College of Rhode Island President Ray M. Di Pasquale
University of Rhode Island Associate Vice President for Human Resources Anne Marie Coleman  
University of Rhode Island Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Director of Housing & Residential Life Chip Yensen

Dr. Robert Samuels, the director of the URI Counseling Center, responded by letter to a request from CSC member Abu Bakr to address the assertion that increases in reports of documented mental illness might attribute to increases in campus violence.

In addition, the CSC held four, two-hour public hearings at the public institutions of higher education. The hearings took place as follows:

- February 4th, 2009 from noon-2:00 p.m. in Room 110, Alger Hall, Rhode Island College  
- February 12th, 2009 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in Room 4080 at the Warwick Campus of the Community College of Rhode Island  
- February 17th, 2009 from noon-2:00 p.m. in Paff Auditorium at the Providence campus of the University of Rhode Island  
- February 25th, 2009 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in Union Hall, Memorial Union at the Kingston campus of the University of Rhode Island.

These public hearings were advertised, publicized and promoted within their campus communities by the news and communications departments of each institution. The CCRi hearing was broadcast via interactive teleconference to the institution’s Lincoln, Providence and Newport campuses and a number of individuals participated in the hearing from those campuses via this arrangement.

Individuals who desired to speak at one of these hearings were asked to sign up prior to the start of the hearing and indicate whether they were “pro” or “con” on the issue of arming campus police. Sign-up sheets were provided at least 30 minutes prior to each meeting. The CSC chair requested the “pro” or “con” indication so he could alternate between each point of view in calling those who wished to speak to ensure that both sides of the argument were heard at each hearing.

The portion of each hearing where individuals who signed up to speak were heard was operated under the rules that the RIBGHE uses for the “Open Forum” portion of its board meetings. Speakers were limited to five (5) minutes in order to give everyone else who signed up a chance to speak. Members of the CSC in attendance listened to each speaker but did not engage in dialogue or Q&A with the speakers. Attendees were also told that they could forward additional comments via the RIBGHE web site at www.ribghe.org.

5.0 - Past Studies of This Issue

Prior to the establishment of the CSC, the last RIBGHE study regarding the potential arming of campus police at the public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island took place in 2000. That study recommended the Board not consider arming its campus police.
In 2002, the University of Rhode Island conducted their own study of the issue specific to the arming of campus police at the University. That study concluded that “Arming University police officers is not prudent at this time; future events may warrant such action.” Both Professor Carroll and Abu Bakr were members of the URI group who studied the issue in 2002.

The CSC received, reviewed and discussed copies of both studies.

It is also worth noting that Brown University armed its campus police in January 2006 after having studied the issue at great length since 2002. Brown’s police force remains the only armed campus police force at a public or private college or university in the state of Rhode Island. According to Colonel Mark Porter of the Brown University Police, the two factors that were most influential in bringing about arming for Brown were the need for management of street crime near the campus and the events of September 11, 2001. In addition, a study of the Brown police force by an outside consultant recommended arming as a means to increase safety in three areas of duty that Brown police officers wanted to handle: arresting individuals, pursuing fleeing suspects and stopping vehicles. All Brown police officers who were armed were graduates of a municipal or State Police academy and were held to the same standards as State Police during their firearms training.

Research conducted by the Office of Higher Education revealed that, as of 2009, Rhode Island was one of only two states without armed police officers at their public institutions of higher education. (The other state was Oregon).

6.0 - Data Review

The CSC reviewed a wide range of data as well as numerous articles and studies, both pro and con, on the subject of arming campus police. Among the data they reviewed and discussed was a ten-year study (1994-2004) by the United States Justice Department which showed that, on average, there were 62 violent crimes per every 100,000 college students during this period. That compared to an average of 462 violent crimes per every 100,000 Americans overall during the same period.

The Commission also reviewed Clery Act data which indicated that violent crimes on campuses had not increased since 2004. (The Clery Act requires all colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs to keep and disclose information about crime on and near their respective campuses. The law is named for Jeanne Clery, a 19-year-old Lehigh University freshman who was raped and murdered in her campus residence hall in 1986. The Clery Act, signed in 1990, was originally known as the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act.)

However, other data showed that there were an average of four (4) student homicides/year from 2000-2005 and that figured doubled to eight (8) homicides in 2006. The number rose to 44 in 2007, including the 32 people who were killed at Virginia Tech University. The figures for 2008 (through November) were at least 13 students killed on their campuses that year.

Other data from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics released in February 2008 showed that in 2004-2005, 86% of public colleges and universities in the United States had armed campus police officers. That study also showed that 82% of all institutions with
enrollments between 5,000 and 10,000 students had armed campus police officers. (All three public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island had enrollments of at least 5,000 students in 2008.)

The CSC reviewed information from the American Association of Colleges & Universities detailing efforts by some states to allow students and/or faculty to carry concealed weapons on college campuses. In particular, it noted that the state of Utah had recently passed such legislation and that seventeen (17) other states were considering similar legislation. None of those states were in New England.

The CSC also reviewed 2007 information from the Office of Postsecondary Education. The information revealed that from 2001-2005, 184 colleges and universities in New England made 278 arrests on campus for illegal possession of weapons, and that less than 25% of those institutions had armed campus police.

Finally, the CSC asked each of the three public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island to present crime statistics for their campuses for the years 2005-2007. Each institution presented a report at a subsequent CSC meeting detailing that information. In summary, the information showed no discernable increase in crime, especially violent crime or weapons-related crime, at any of the institutions during this period in time. CCRI did note that several criminal incidents took place near or close by its Providence campus involving weapons. On one or two of those occasions, individuals involved in those incidents did trespass on the campus with the weapons in their possession.

7.0 - Campus Police at the Public Institutions of Higher Education

At the time of the commission meetings, each institution reported the following number of sworn officers:

University of Rhode Island - 24 officers (across four campuses, only two of which are staffed with police)
Rhode Island College - 19 officers (on a single campus) At Rhode Island College, the five Lieutenants also act as dispatchers rather than road supervisors.
Community College of Rhode Island - 30 officers (across 4 campuses)

Both Rhode Island College and CCRI only hire post certified police officers.

One of the changes that occurred at URI after the 2002 study has resulted in a clear distinction between sworn officers, security personnel and parking personnel. Security personnel were essentially reorganized into a department of public safety. Campus Security Commission member Major Steven Baker is the URI Police Administrator reporting to the Director of Public Safety. Each level of public safety at URI has different color vehicles and different uniforms.
At the University, extensive negotiations over several years have established and filled positions ranging from Police Officer I to Major. URI Assistant Vice President for Human Resources Anne Marie Coleman told the CSC that the union which represents the police officers has challenged URI on whether or not lieutenants are civil service employees of the state or Board of Governors employees (which would put them in a different service and classification than other campus police officers). The outcome of the grievance that was filed will determine who would direct and who would bargain for those employees. The RIBGHE currently has a request for declaratory judgment pending on this issue.

URI also reported that its 2002 study identified a number of other issues which the University ultimately decided were more important to the campus community than arming campus police. These included areas such as proper campus lighting, the use of surveillance cameras and alarms, hazardous waste policies, hazardous waste storage, etc. Many of these areas have been addressed since the 2002 study and the Kingston campus has become a much safer place since that time.

All campus police officers at each of the public institutions are required to pass the Rhode Island Municipal Police Training Academy within one year of hire. Major Baker told the CSC that Academy-trained police officers conduct all background investigations of URI campus police candidates (which can entail upwards of 40 hours per candidate) and that those who do not pass the background check are not hired.

In addition, these officers are subjected to a formal field training and evaluation program after graduating the Academy, complete with daily documentation by the new hire’s field training officer. At the time of the first few commission meetings, URI was in the process of hiring its first University Police Sergeant. This position has since been filled and has freed up a Lieutenant who has been assigned to the full-time duties of Training Officer and Accreditation Manager. A Campus Police Training Institute at URI provides additional training opportunities for campus police officers.

None of the three public institutions in Rhode Island have accredited campus police departments, nor is such accreditation necessary in order to have for campus police to carry weapons. (According to the National Association of Black Campus Law Enforcement Officers, 373 public institutions of higher education in the United States have armed campus police departments and only 25 are accredited.)

8.0 - Views of the Presidents

As noted, the CSC heard from each of the three individuals who were presidents of system institutions at the time. Their comments are summarized as follows:

8.1 - Robert Carothers – URI
Dr. Carothers met with the Campus Security Commission at URI's Kingston campus on October 8, 2008. He stated to the CSC that for most of his time at the University, he had not been supportive of arming campus police. However, he stated that since September 11, 2001, the world is a different place and there is greater risk in the populations that are now on campus for a variety of
events and activities. He believes that the opening of the Ryan Center has changed the composition of the URI campus community on many nights of the week. His position on the issue, as stated to the CSC, was that he would be willing to support the arming of campus police if there were a high standard of training and enhanced professionalism. He also stated that he would like to see full accreditation of the URI police force. He further emphasized that campus police, if armed, would need to be trained for the specific environment of a university community which has a different demographic than a municipal environment and requires a different orientation to the types of challenges that are faced. He also raised the question of the cost of arming campus police vs. the liability issues the RIBGHE and the University could face if an incident occurred that might otherwise have been prevented or disrupted if officers on campus were armed.

Dr. Carothers did say that he was satisfied with the current time of response from the South Kingstown Police and also the time of response from the State Police, calling them both "a big help."

(Note: Since Dr. Carothers' meeting with the CSC, he has retired as URI's president. The new president is Dr. David Dooley, who came to URI from Montana State University, an institution which has an armed campus police force. The CSC suggests that President Dooley's views and opinions on the issue of arming campus police should be sought by the RIBGHE prior to any Board action involving the University.)

8.2 - Ray M. Di Pasquale – CCRI
Ray Di Pasquale met with the Campus Security Commission at CCRI's Warwick campus on October 22, 2008. Before coming to Rhode Island, President Di Pasquale spent eight years as an administrator at the State University of New York/Brockport in Upstate New York. This institution of about 9,000 students (including 2,700 residents) had armed its campus police before President Di Pasquale's arrival and was now working toward accreditation. President Di Pasquale said he could only recall one incident in which a weapon was drawn during his tenure at SUNY/Brockport and the weapon was not fired. He said he had observed that SUNY/Brockport's campus administrators and officers saw the weapons as preventive pieces and deterrents to criminal behavior. (The President also noted that while students at SUNY/Brockport embraced an armed campus police force, that may not necessarily be the case with incumbent and incoming CCRI students. Major Baker informed the members of the CSC that Westerly High School, which houses a CCRI satellite campus, already has an armed police presence.)

President Di Pasquale said that he also worked for 20 years in Massachusetts where 31 of the 69 community college campuses had armed police forces and 38 did not.

President Di Pasquale said that he, too, shared the view that armed police officers would be more of a deterrent to criminal behavior. He said that his major concern with moving ahead to arm campus police at the public institutions in Rhode Island would be the cost. He noted that CCRI (as well as URI and RIC) were already grappling with declining state funding and the need to prioritize important needs such as staffing, failing infrastructure and facilities maintenance. The arming of campus police would only add to that list. He said the Board should weigh the total cost of arming and the other issues related to arming with the potential cost of not arming, as in the
liability issues that the Board and the institutions could face if there were a violent or even fatal incident on one of our campuses.

President Di Pasquale noted that CCRI’s four campuses are very different with one (Newport) relatively quiet and others (Warwick and Providence) places where there have been incidents. He mentioned armed bank robbers appearing on the CCRI Providence campus (and one of them committing suicide on the campus perimeter). He also said that the woods surrounding the Warwick campus have housed shoplifters from the adjacent malls and even vagrants with knives in their possession. He noted that even when the Warwick campus doors are locked at 10:00 p.m., it is not difficult to access the building and said that he hoped to be able to add more security cameras to assist in that regard. He mentioned that he had tried to add more security cameras to the parking lot areas for safety/security purposes but that faculty complained about a “Big Brother” mentality. In contrast, the large campus in Lincoln seems safer to its students because of the on-campus police academy in partnership with the Lincoln Police Department.

In closing, President DiPasquale said that he would like the Board to closely examine the costs of arming and he hoped that, if arming were approved, training costs could be shared by the three institutions.

There was some discussion about whether it would be feasible to arm just one higher education institution and not necessarily all three institutions. President Di Pasquale said he felt the decision should be made on an institution-by-institution basis because the campuses of the system differ in population, location, environment and other factors.

8.3 - Nancy Carriuolo – RIC
Nancy Carriuolo met with the Campus Security Commission at Rhode Island College on November 5, 2008. President Carriuolo, like President Carothers, noted that her campus has always appreciated quick response from municipal police. She specifically mentioned a North Providence Police sub-station within walking distance of campus. She also expressed a strong preference for campus officers who were familiar with the RIC campus and community when responding to situations. President Carriuolo said she already sees student respect for campus officers and does not know that weapons would enhance that respect, but she reiterated that campus police would be preferable in responding to a grave situation rather than non-campus police unfamiliar with the student body and/or the RIC community. She lauded RIC’s campus police department for what she believes is a strong prevention program and highlighted some of the prevention training held by the college. She noted that, whether or not the RIC campus arms its officers, she wanted to maintain the focus on campus vigilance.

Whether or not RIC’s campus police are armed, President Carriuolo said she would like to explore accreditation given that it is a sign of professional excellence in law enforcement. She did note that cost is a concern but she was firm in her belief that if RIC chooses to arm its officers, every officer would need to be properly trained and equipped without cutting corners. She mentioned that a recent evaluation of RIC’s patrol cars determined them to be an aged fleet. She said that if RIC were to move to the next level of law enforcement, money would need to be found to keep the campus fully and safely equipped.
In response to questions about RIC staffing levels, RIC Security Director Cy Cote said that the College badly needs full-time dispatchers because he and other officers have been stuck answering phones instead of patrolling when the department is short-handed. He estimates that three FTEs are needed for this purpose. (URI has four dispatchers and was in the process of hiring a fifth.)

9.0 - Other Security Measures in Existence at the Institutions

9.1 - Counseling Centers
All three public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island have mental health and counseling centers to assist students and faculty who might have need of their services. These centers meet with and treat individuals who come to them voluntarily seeking help as well as those who are referred to the centers by faculty or campus staff.

URI’s Counseling Center is a mental health provider with eight full-time psychologists who interact with students. The Center provides specialized counseling dealing with disabilities, body image issues, abusive/violent relationships, substance abuse and a range of other problems. The protocol is for the URI Division of Student Affairs to link students considered to be “in distress” with the resources of the Center. Faculty members are then advised on three levels: one-time occurrences, evidence of trends or patterns that lead to a consultation with the Dean and with the Center, and severe conditions (in which case the faculty member is advised to contact URI campus police).

URI’s 140 Resident Advisors (RAs) are also trained to flag distressed students.

The CSC heard from URI that the ratio of students who visit the counseling center is believed to be similar to and consistent with national numbers. As noted elsewhere in this report, while there has been an increase nationally and locally in the number of mental health cases, that is believed to be attributed to more and better access to care and counseling than anything else. URI has sent students to South County Hospital and to Butler Hospital when deemed necessary and appropriate and has also consulted with students’ mental health providers in their home state.

With regard to violent or worrisome creative writing, URI noted that its faculty err on the side of caution and consult with the vice president of academic affairs on incidents of this nature, as well as with the director of residential life and/or the director of the counseling center. If the writing is deemed to show cause for alarm, a review and assessment committee is convened to address the situation.

Rhode Island College’s counseling center also conducts training for faculty and staff. In addition, the College has a group that meets to discuss any “red flag” items.

CCRI has a threat assessment team and a mechanism that allows individuals to post concerns on the CCRI web site. In addition, CCRI has a protocol for training sessions on managing students’ problem behavior and has conducted such sessions. It was noted that CCRI’s open enrollment
policy sometimes leads to more students with issues. CCRI security officers do not undergo training at present to deal with individuals with mental health issues.

9.2 - Cameras/Surveillance
URI has about 90 outside surveillance cameras that operate 24/7. They have recently been upgraded to provide 30 days storage capacity; however, most of the cameras are at least four years old.

While there have been no faculty complaints along “Big Brother” lines, some students have complained in this regard. Student privacy is respected on dorm floors. The only cameras in the residential buildings are in the staircases and lobbies. URI has also placed hidden cameras in select areas from time to time when reports of repeated vandalism have been filed.

RIC and CCRI have what is considered “a minimal” amount of security cameras. As noted by CCRI President Di Pasquale, his effort to install additional security cameras in the parking lot of the Warwick campus was rebuffed by faculty.

9.3 - Blue Light Alarms
URI has a number of blue-light emergency phones located throughout campus. Some have been retro-fitted with red lights and sirens. RIC recently upgraded its blue-light phones with loudspeaker capability allowing the College to give a reverse (general campus) warning in case of an emergency.

CCRI has no blue-light emergency stations on any of its campuses.

9.4 - Building Lock Down
URI has assigned two full-time security officers to lock down buildings. Only a few academic buildings can be locked down electronically. It would be very difficult to lock down the remainder of the academic buildings in a timely manner. Dorms are electronic and are secured at night. Security screens are installed on all first-floor windows. An access card system has been in place since the mid ‘90s. URI can lock down its 22 residential buildings from one central location (although there is a small time lag). Half of these buildings have closed-circuit television cameras and heavy-grade doors.

URI students are allowed to “float” between buildings using their electronic ID cards anytime between 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. but after 8:00 p.m. the cards only access a student’s own dorm. One huge security problem is the fact that students often prop open doors for their friends to enter. URI repeatedly educates students on the dangers of this practice, but it is recognized as a universal problem among college students.

Rhode Island College depends on audits by its facilities and operations departments regarding locks on buildings.
CCRI has no residential buildings, but noted that its emergency response plans call for barricading people into classrooms for safety, but the doors all open out rather than in. In addition, CCRI classrooms do not have the ability to lock against intruders. It was estimated that adding a bolt could cost $30-$50 per door in every room on CCRI’s campuses.

9.5 - Emergency Notification
In 2008, URI installed the MIR III emergency notification system. This is a voluntary sign-up system that texts emergency messages to students, faculty and staff cell phones. At the time of its report to the CSC, URI reported an 80% participation rate. The system is also used for class cancellations due to severe weather and was used in March 2008 for a bomb threat at Swan Hall.

Rhode Island College also installed an emergency notification system in 2008 and CCRI followed suit in 2009. Like URI, these institutions are continuously working to increase the number of students who provide a cell phone number which allows them to participate in the system.

9.6 - Incident Response
URI reported that, due to the fact that they are unarmed, campus police officers currently cannot be first responders and would be at a major tactical disadvantage to serious threats such as the presence of a weapon. The University works with South Kingstown police on response plans to weapons-related incidents and would mainly handle perimeter control and information gathering in such an instance. Photos and floor plans of all buildings on all campuses are available for such emergencies. While the South Kingstown Police Station is only two miles away from URI and the town’s officers frequently patrol the area, they also have to cover all of South Kingstown. Their response time to a serious incident would likely be in the range of 8-10 minutes while URI campus police could likely be in the area within two minutes or less.

It was noted for the CSC that Rhode Island State Police response time would not be any faster than South Kingstown’s because the State Police Tactical Team would need to respond with specialized tools and equipment (breaching tools and armored vehicle) which are centrally stored at State Police Headquarters in North Scituate.

RIC and CCRI officers also cannot be first responders to the presence of a weapon and would similarly be at a major tactical disadvantage because of their unarmed status. RIC relies on relationships with Providence and North Providence Police and CCRI on relationships with the police departments in the four communities where they have campuses. Both institutions reported that they enjoy good working relationships with these police departments and that their response time is fairly quick.

9.7 - Additional Training
URI police officers are involved with student orientation and attend meetings with parents. Officers also serve as instructors at “URI 101,” a required course for all first-year students, and present at least once a month during new employee training. In addition, all RAs are trained to discuss personal safety with the students in their respective dorms. The RAs also distribute a student handbook which includes information on how disruptions are handled. Students are instructed to call URI’s crisis number (2121) in the event of an emergency and are also given the
number for an anonymous tip line. (It was noted that if students called 911, that call would route to a dispatcher in North Providence who then would have to determine whether to involve South Kingstown or URI police. Due to the time lag involved, students are encouraged to call 2121 which routes directly to the URI campus police station.)

Rhode Island College and CCRI officers attend required programs such as First Aid/CPR training. The College sends its officers to programs offered by other sources including the Municipal Training Academy, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Association and the Providence Police. Three of its officers have dedicated slots for a program entitled “Mental Health First Aid” to assist officers in dealing with such issues. CCRI officers have attended National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) certification training level 100 and 200 classes and also mental health first aid.

9.8 - Other

URI has a wide range of policies and procedures for emergency response issues such as weather emergencies, catastrophes, mental health issues, etc. These protocols are mainly used after hours and on weekends when less staff is on hand. These protocols are posted in some campus buildings but not in all of them.

10.0 - Result of the Open Forums

As noted earlier, the Commission held four opens forums in the month of February 2008, two on URI campuses in Kingston and Providence and one each at RIC and CCRI with the CCRI forum broadcast via interactive teleconference to the College’s three other campuses. All forums were attended by members of the CSC. The CSC then met in March 2008 to discuss and review the comments and testimony given at the forums.

Faculty and students who appeared at the forums presented views both in favor of and in opposition to the arming of campus police while campus police and other law enforcement officials who testified supported arming. The CSC deemed it odd that students would perceive the presence of armed police on campus negatively because many high schools in Rhode Island and elsewhere have had armed police within their buildings on a daily basis for the last few years.

Others testified that they were worried about accidental discharge of a weapon (although it was noted that there has not been a documented case of such an incident in 26 years), and excessive force against people with disabilities. Leo Carroll noted that there have been three or four (off-campus) incidents in Rhode Island within the past year in which a mentally ill person had been shot, rightfully or wrongfully, by police officers. He suggested that the high degree of media coverage of those incidents may have helped make them top-of-mind for people who testified at the forums.

Some individuals testified that they were not opposed to arms on campus if officers did not carry weapons but left them locked in a secure facility to retrieve when needed. Lt. Manni noted that doing so would reduce officers’ options in reacting quickly to situations.
Several members of the CSC noted that they did not find the comments at the open forums surprising. These members said that they found student and faculty responses to be drawn from an emotional perspective without fact or without access to much research on the topic. For example, Jerry Coyne of the RI Attorney General’s Office mentioned testimony at one hearing which recalled one of the off-campus incidents whereby a mentally-ill person had been shot and said that the individual presenting the testimony took several liberties with the facts of the case. Several CSC members said that there seemed to be a lack of knowledge about the functions and training of campus police officers. This further underscores the need for continued dialogue with campus constituencies as to any future actions the Board might decide to take in relation to the issue of campus security.

CSC members were in general agreement that crime is not the strongest reason for arming campus police. The issue of mental illness is playing a larger and larger role in our society. According to the March 2009 letter to members of the CSC from Dr. Robert M. Samuels, the URI Counseling Center director, a 2007 survey of University and College Counseling Center directors confirms this. The majority of directors reported significant increases in the number of students coming to college being prescribed psychotropic medication, as well as those presenting with severe psychological problems. Some of this increase can no doubt be attributed to increased diagnoses of various types of mental illness due to more and better access to care and counseling. Some of it is also linked to behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse. Whatever the reasons are for the increase, Rhode Island’s college campuses appear to be dealing with more students who have mental health issues than they were ten years ago.

The CSC noted that, for the most part, students, faculty and staff seemed pleased with the current level of service they are presently receiving from campus police officers. (Major Baker noted that the URI Student Senate passed a resolution in the Spring of 2009 recommending that the RIBGHE approve equipping the URI campus police with tasers, stored firearms, or both as a means to allowing URI’s campus police to become the University’s emergency response plan.)

The open forums also reinforced the idea that there is a unique culture as well as unique needs on each campus which caused the CSC to again posit the question of whether a decision to arm police should be made on an institution-by-institution basis. It was noted that armed officers are perceived to be less approachable and CSC members were in general agreement that, if armed, campus police officers may need further cultural and/or sensitivity training.

Several individuals testified that, given the current financial state of affairs facing Rhode Island public higher education, monies that might be considered to arm campus police should be redirected to other education-related areas.

Although they did not appear at the open forums, the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association sent a letter to the RIBGHE, dated March 23, 2009, stating that they had passed a motion at their February meeting supporting the efforts to arm the POST certified campus police officers at the public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island. The letter was signed by Association President Chief George L. Kelley, III of the Pawtucket Police Department.
11.0 - Cost of Arming
CSC member Lt. James Manni of the Rhode Island State Police was asked to present an estimate for the potential cost of arming campus police at the institutions. He detailed the estimated costs as follows:

11.1 - Psychological Evaluation
All officers at each institution would need to undergo a psychological evaluation as a first step to determine whether or not they were mentally fit to carry weapons. The cost of that evaluation is estimated at approximately $350 per officer. Total estimated system cost (for 73 officers) - $25,550.

11.2 - Equipment (for 73 officers)
Approximately $750 for each weapon ($54,750 total)
Approximately $175 for each weapon holster ($12,775 total)
Approximately $185 for each duty belt and magazine pouch ($13,505 total)
Approximately $1,500 for body armor for each officer. ($109,500 total)
About $100 for range supplies for each officer ($7,300)
About $185 for 1,000 rounds of practice ammunition for each officer. ($13,505 total)
Approximately $45 for each officer for 150 rounds of duty ammunition. ($3,285)

FBI statistics indicate that approximately 20% of the officers killed with a weapon are killed with their own weapon. Therefore, while on duty each officer must wear the proper level of body armor to stop a bullet from their own weapon in the event they are disarmed.

Total estimated equipment costs: Approximately $2,940 for each officer or $214,620 for the 73 officers all three institutions.

11.3 - Equipment Storage
The consensus from the institutional representatives on the commission was that campus armories would need to be constructed so that all weapons could be properly and safely stored. This would involve the purchase of at least one large gun safe per campus (estimated at about $1,500 each). Depending on the facilities at each institution, it might also involve the construction of an addition to campus police headquarters or somewhere else appropriate to each campus in order to accommodate the gun safe and the proper storage of weapons. URI, for example, estimated that it would cost approximately $30,000 to add a small, stand-alone room to its building. All CSC members agreed that a campus armory would make stored weapons less accessible to faculty, staff and students and thus provide a safer environment.

11.4 - Police Cars
The CSC discussed the question of whether or not upgrading or replacing campus police vehicles was a necessary component to arming campus police and should be factored into any cost analysis. It was agreed that while upgraded vehicles would be welcome, the need to have vehicles that were fit for pursuit was an accreditation and not an arming issue.
11.5 - Training

Lt. Manni supervised the training for Brown University when campus police were armed at that institution in 2006. He stated that all officers must undergo approximately 120 hours of training. The first 80 hours is the most important and is done continuously. This involves basic/advanced live firearms training. The second round of training (20 hours of officer survival training) and the third round (20 hours of plainclothes/off-duty/undercover encounters, motor vehicle stops and tactical training) can be broken up. State law requires biannual in-service training which involves firing a minimum of 100 rounds of ammunition. Lt. Manni said his experience is that 300 rounds per officer are needed to certify that officer.

Several members of the CSC also suggested that, whether or not a decision was made to go forward with arming, each campus police officer should also undergo training in issues dealing with cultural sensitivity, diversity, issue identification and resolution, and assisting individuals with possible mental health concerns.

The training process was described as taking about one year in total. Training would ideally be done by the Rhode Island State Police; however, Lt. Manni could not provide cost estimates and it was unclear to the CSC exactly what that training might cost. Much would depend on whether the State Police agreed to do the training; if so, when they would be able to conduct the training; what that training might cost; how many people would be trained at one time, etc. The CSC agreed that if the RIBGHE were interested in moving forward to arm campus police officers a discussion would need to take place with State Police Superintendent Colonel Brendan Doherty as to these and other issues involving that training. If for whatever reason the State Police were unable or unwilling to conduct the training within a timeframe that was feasible for the institutions, other options would need to be identified, discussed and a cost determined for each option.

Regardless of who conducted the training, each institution would need to address how to handle the training for each officer. One option is to train all officers at once in the off-season (summer) which might allow for some officers to be taken off shift vs. paying them overtime. A second option is to train officers during the academic year in shifts. (It was noted that scheduling on-duty officers can be a nightmare, so although other scenarios involve paying overtime one of those is likely the most feasible option.) Using an average of $28/hour, it would cost the system $265,720 if all 73 officers needed to be paid overtime for all 120 hours of training and for 10 hours of sensitivity/diversity training. If less overtime were necessary, that figure would be reduced.

The necessary biannual eight hours of in-service firearms training would cost approximately $60 for 300 rounds of practice ammunition and $15 for 50 rounds of duty ammunition for each officer, in addition to the specific cost of the training.

(When Col. Porter appeared before the commission, he estimated that Brown University spent about $56,000 annually on officer training for approximately 30 officers.)
11.6 - Estimated Cost Per Institution
Using the figures above, it is estimated that psychological evaluations, equipment, and overtime costs (using the $28/hr. average noted above) to allow for training would amount to $164,595 for RI College's 20 officers; $231,120 for URI's 24 officers and; $336,150 for CCRIP's 30 officers. These figures also include $31,500 for a gun safe and facility at Rhode Island College, $63,000 for two gun safes and facilities at the University of Rhode Island (one in Kingston and one in Providence) and $126,000 for four gun safes and facilities at the Community College of Rhode Island (one safe and facility at each of CCRIP's four campuses). Fewer gun safes may be needed if the Board decides not to arm all institutions and/or all campuses of each institution.

That means the CSC's maximum estimate to the system for psychological evaluations, equipment, facilities and overtime is approximately $731,865. It must be emphasized that this figure does not include the cost of 120 hours of training and any cultural diversity/sensitivity training.

12.0 - Lethal vs. Less-Than-Lethal Weapons
The CSC discussed the possibility of whether or not officers might be armed with less-than-lethal weapons. The general consensus was that if an officer interjected himself or herself into a situation with a less-than-lethal weapon which then escalated in violence (i.e., the perpetrator pulled out a knife or a gun), the officer would then have no viable exit from that situation.

13.0 - Human Resource Issues
There was discussion at several CSC meetings about what would happen to an existing campus police officer if he/she did not meet the qualifications to be armed. The CSC was informed that such a situation would create a class within a class of employees (individuals who were able to carry a weapon and others who were not). This would be a major issue within the system and yet there is no guarantee that every officer currently working at one of the three public institutions of higher education would be able to meet the physical and/or psychological requirements to carry a weapon. The RIBGHE would need to make a policy decision on the options available to a currently-employed campus police officer who did not qualify to carry a weapon.

(In Brown University's case, Colonel Porter told the CSC that officers who failed to qualify could receive remediation and retest. Officers who still didn't meet the standard could elect to leave their position or take the option of remaining as a security officer - as opposed to a police officer - with frozen pay.)

It was noted that the body armor which armed officers must wear anytime they are on duty is made of 30 layers of plastic and is about one half-inch thick. This body armor is heavy and uncomfortable, especially in the hot summer months, a factor that must be weighed as to the physical fitness of campus police officers and whether or not they are physically capable and qualified to carry weapons.

The CSC was told that the institutions' respective Human Resource Departments would have to develop policies and procedures on how to proceed if a campus police officer had a note from a doctor stating that he or she was not physically able to wear the body armor.
There are also issues of classification in that all campus police officers do not currently bargain with the RIBGHE. Some campus police (members of Council 94) currently bargain as part of the larger state-wide unit.

In addition, due to the increase in professional standard, the RIBHGE would be obligated to adjust salaries of armed campus police. This would also entail changing job descriptions.

14.0 - Insurance Issues
The Office of Higher Education informed the CSC that no change would be necessary to the RIBGHE’s existing insurance policy to accommodate the arming of campus police nor would there be any additional insurance premium should the RIBGHE decide to arm its campus police.

15.0 - Faculty, Staff or Student Rights/Privacy Issues
The Office of Higher Education’s General Counsel and URI’s Associate Vice President for Human Resources both reviewed this issue and determined that arming campus police at any or all of the public institutions of higher education would not constitute a violation of rights or privacy issues for faculty, students and/or staff.

16.0 - Recommendations of the Commission
The CSC’s study of the issue has led it to make the following recommendations to the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education:

1. The RIBGHE and the Commissioner of Higher Education should work with the three system presidents to address ongoing and overall security and risk management issues on each of their campuses. The CSC would like to see each president work with the appropriate individuals at his/her institution to prepare a list of priority needs and items that are deemed necessary and critical to better safety and security on their campus whether those items are equipment-based, of a policy nature or personnel-oriented. Each president should also prepare a cost estimate for these items. The CSC recommends that the RIBGHE then hold a detailed conversation with each president as to that president’s views regarding what is best done to improve the safety/security of their institution.

2. The RIBGHE should also ask each president to assess the means and capabilities of their campus counseling centers for dealing with faculty, students and/or staff who may have mental health issues. In particular, the CSC recommends that each campus counseling center be provided with enough human and financial resources so as to be able to conduct training sessions for all faculty, staff and students on how to recognize individuals who are exhibiting signs of mental illness and how best to react and respond in such situations. The CSC further recommends that such training sessions should be mandated for all campus police and campus security personnel at each institution.
3. While there was not unanimous agreement among members of the CSC on the question of arming campus police, there was consensus that, the RIBGHE should seriously consider developing a plan to properly and correct arm campus police at one or more of its public institutions of higher education. The same sentiment was voiced by the presidents of all three institutions in their interviews with the CSC.

The CSC defines “properly and correctly” as follows:

- Complete and proper training, including psychological examinations for each and every campus police officer, prior to the appearance of any armed campus police on any campus;
- Consultation with the Rhode Island State Police as to the standard for complete and proper training; who would conduct the training; how, when and where it would be conducted; the cost of such training; and what training would necessary on an annual and ongoing basis for any officers who might carry weapons on campus;
- RIBGHE commitment to fully fund the cost of all necessary training, both initial and ongoing, as well as the cost of all necessary equipment and facilities required to properly implement and introduce an armed campus police force to any college community where the RIBGHE might deem their introduction necessary;
- Ongoing dialogue with the administration, faculty, staff and students of each institution concerning any Board decision to arm campus police at that institution. Although the CSC did conduct one open forum meeting at each institution (two at URI), this is probably not sufficient. If the RIBGHE decides to arm campus police at one or more institutions, it needs to work with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the three system presidents to discuss how that decision is best communicated to each campus community. There needs to be dialogue with a variety of constituencies within each campus community to allow for questions to be raised and addressed prior to a final decision being made for that campus.
- Development of a timetable as to when armed campus police might appear on a campus. If the RIBGHE decides to move forward with arming its campus police, the CSC recommends it develop a timetable in consultation with the Rhode Island State Police as to how much time would be necessary and appropriate to design, develop and complete the training, purchase of equipment and installation of any necessary facilities so that one or more of the institutions can plan for the first appearance of armed campus police on their respective campus.

4. Whether or not the RIBGHE decides to arm campus police at one or more of its institutions, the CSC recommends that every campus police officer at each institution undergo training in issues dealing with cultural sensitivity, diversity, issue identification and resolution. The demographics of our campuses have changed in the last decade and will continue to change in the years ahead. The sometimes controversial relationship between law enforcement officials at all levels – including campus police – and communities of color require outreach, dialogue and training to combat misperceptions and stereotyping by any of the parties involved. As one CSC member stated, “It is naïve to believe that students who come from communities where negative relationships with police are real and/or perceived will not be impacted by the introduction of weapons on campus.”
The CSC is cognizant that, at the time of its study, Rhode Island was one of only two states (Oregon was the other one) without an armed campus police presence at its public institutions of higher education. As such, the CSC is concerned about liability issues which the RIBGHE might face if there were to be an incident on one of its campuses.

The CSC also recognizes that significant work has been undertaken in recent years to develop campus cultures of nonviolence and peaceful resolutions to conflict. The Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at URI is a prime example of this work.

The CSC understands that Rhode Island’s public higher education system has faced especially difficult financial times in recent years, having lost over $33 million in state appropriation since the end of fiscal 2006. It also understands that the cost of the training, equipment and facilities involved in the arming of campus police is significant and would be an additional burden to the system. However, the CSC believes that funding should not be the primary determinant in the Board’s decision of whether or not to arm the campus police. The desire to provide its officers with the proper training and tools so that campus police as first responders would be better protected and able to respond with appropriate force if the need arose to deal with an assailant with a deadly weapon should be considered equally with funding concerns. The CSC emphasizes that unless the RIBGHE is committed and able to find a way to address the economic costs necessary to properly and correctly train and arm its campus police, then arming should not be pursued at this time.

Finally, the CSC recognizes that the recommendations contained in this report are advisory in nature and that the ultimate decision on this issue rests with the RIBGHE.