

# Securing a Seat at the Executive Table: Master Planning for Campus Safety

IACLEA Session

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Jim Moore, Moderator

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

On behalf of the CriticalArc team and our amazing panel of experts, we want to thank you for participating in our session at the IACLEA conference, “Securing a Seat at the Executive Table: Master Planning for Campus Safety.” This session was based on the factual premise that true campus safety is not a disparate collection of taskings and operations and instead should be understood as a critical component of an effective institution-wide enterprise risk management program.

In our work with institutions, we often find that the campus safety and crime prevention functions are misaligned. Campus safety leaders often find themselves reporting to members of the executive team who have little, if any, relevant knowledge or experience. The problem is often made worse by the mismatches that can arise because campus safety doesn't necessarily fit neatly into the typical organizational chart of an educational institution. This scenario plays out all over the country, often with serious and even tragic consequences.



CriticalArc's team can help with master planning

No matter the challenge, we cannot allow the campus safety function to be minimized or set aside given its importance. CriticalArc selected this topic to bring needed attention to strategies that can literally help campus safety professionals and thought leaders get that coveted seat at the table. Jim Moore, formerly of the Department of Education and now a Senior Executive Consultant with CriticalArc served as the moderator for this excellent session. Our panel included Dr. Denise Cornish, Chief Operating Officer and Senior VP at Western University of Health Sciences, Chief Daran Dodd, University of North Carolina, Ashville Police Department, and Chief Stephen Gahagans of the University of Arkansas Police Department.



Campus safety professionals must understand and accept that some members of the executive team may not understand how essential campus safety is to creating and sustaining a high-performing, healthy, resilient, and supportive campus community. Our panel shared their experience and insights on how they gained access to the C-Suite and enhanced the positioning and prestige of campus safety at their schools. They did it by not simply focusing on day-to-day operations but by showing how campus safety is an essential cog in identifying and mitigating tangible and intangible elements of risk across the enterprise. Campus safety is also key to complying with statutes and regulations related to campus safety, civil rights, and substance abuse prevention. Campus safety leaders also have highlighted the reputational harm that can result from the lapses in safety covered by the press and in social media. The cascading negative effects on safety concerns can also have detrimental effects of enrollment and support from donors and other stakeholders.

Elevation of the campus safety function and its leaders also helps to ensure that relevant policies, procedures, and programming related to student and employee conduct and safety-related matters are developed and implemented in alignment with the institution's mission, vision, and values and help to ensure that they will also meet the safety needs of the campus community. Involving public safety on the front end will help to minimize the need for abrupt changes and the confusion that can result from a failure to fully consider safety issues and properly incorporate them into communications and directives.

US CriticalArc customers learning abroad



Most of us got into higher education because we love the educational process and want to contribute to the development of the next generations of leaders. Keeping campus communities safe is essential to that goal. As Connie Clery herself once said, “the best education in the world is useless if a student doesn’t survive with a healthy body and mind.” Although college campuses can be incredible places where dreams are realized and possibilities are endless, in the final analysis, institutions of higher education are, in fact, giant knots of risk. The public, in all of its constituent parts - students, employees, parents, policymakers, the media, donors and the rest - are all concerned about these risks so institutions must be as well.

We have seen this recently with a range of issues from COVID response to the management of extreme weather events to campus protests, demonstrations, and encampments. The difference between the campuses that managed these matters well and those that didn’t often came down to organizational alignment, cohesive and durable leadership, persuasive communication and coordination, the effective use of technology, ongoing high-quality training and support that reaches all members of the campus community. The nature and extent of these risks require that campus safety be represented in the C-Suite either by campus safety personnel or a knowledgeable and influential champion on the cabinet or executive committee. At CriticalArc, we encourage schools to elevate the Director-level position to the cabinet level, so this important voice is literally in the room when key decisions are made. But even if the institution decides not to take that approach, the most important thing is that the campus safety voice is heard and considered as key decisions are made.

Both at the planning stage and certainly in moments of crisis, matters of safety must be paramount, including in areas that not everyone sees as critical incidents. Beyond crime prevention and response, many issues facing the modern institution of higher education pose serious safety and risk management concerns, including extreme weather, large crowd events, the protection of minors, camp administration, mandated monetization of campus assets, risks associated with deferred maintenance, hate incidents, hazing, protests, demonstrations, and encampments, to name just a few. Persistent concerns about sexual violence, substance abuse, and mental health and suicide continue to confront campus communities.

Our panel in action at IACLEA





When you help the executive team and the board understand the range of safety concerns, it becomes easier to build support for additional investments in a comprehensive campus safety, crime prevention, student wellness, and regulatory compliance program. When this level of buy-in is achieved, it is easy to understand the return on investment. To establish credibility and ongoing support, campus safety leaders must be able to compile, contextualize, and optimize accurate and complete data and present it to key stakeholders at every level of the institution. In these times when budgets are often tight and support for campus safety is in question, it is also important to help senior executives understand the absolute essential role of staff training, development, and retention.

Your team must also be able explain the essential role that the effective deployment of high-quality technology plays in 21<sup>st</sup> Century safety programs. Expertise and technology are no longer a luxury. They are indispensable to the creation of a safe learning environment and an effective risk mitigation strategy. At CriticalArc, we provide the very best campus safety technology and world class consulting services that act as a force multiplier and support system for your campus safety team's most valuable asset, its people. We provide the industry's best technology that allows institutions to make informed decisions about effective ways to keep campus community members safe and to quickly and efficiently deploy resources based on facts, not assumptions and guesswork.

Our best-in-business expertise and technology help to ensure that students and employees are fully informed about incidents and issues that could affect their health and safety. Accurate, timely, and transparent communication of information about safety helps campus community members take an active and informed role in their own safety and security, to assist friends and colleagues, and to protect their property.

We want to help schools improve, enhance, and elevate their campus safety, crime prevention, and Clery compliance programs. At CriticalArc Global Consulting, one of our key points is that “crime is everywhere and crime moves.” There is no such thing as an inherently safe campus, and therefore, we must be vigilant and diligent in all we do, even if serious incidents of crime have been relatively few and far between in the past. Along these lines, our session also counseled institutions to embed campus safety principles into campus processes and infuse it into the campus culture. Safety cannot begin and end in the Department of Public Safety, so it is essential that we foster and sustain institution wide collaboration and engagement and include the entire campus community in the design and development of the safety program.

From there, these efforts must be “stress tested” and adjusted to meet shifting needs through high-quality training, technical assistance, and advisory services to ensure consistent application and common understanding across all stakeholder groups.

To summarize, our session focused on key themes related to the strategic positioning and leadership of the campus safety function, the essential use of data and predictive analytics, helping leaders across the institution and in all constituent groups understand the return on investment and the benefits of ongoing innovation in the campus safety space. We also discussed the importance of alignment, both in terms of institutional structure and consistency with the institution’s mission, vision, and values, so campus safety becomes ingrained into campus culture. Once again, it was our great pleasure to share with you, and we are very thankful that you chose our session. We know that you had many choices, and we appreciate that you chose ours. We encourage you to take a look at all our offerings and to reach out to us anytime we can be of service.



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