

VVC Discusses Emergency Readiness

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By Charity Lindsey

VICTORVILLE – In light of the recent tragic events at community colleges including the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College on Oct. 1, Victor Valley College officials recognized the timely need to provide a security update at its board meeting Tuesday evening.

VVC Police Chief Leonard Knight spoke to provide information on the police department's emergency readiness before the Board of Trustees.

Knight mentioned in his opening statements that there have been several incidents in the last few weeks that have “resulted in the loss of numerous lives as well as injuries on college campuses.”

“Surely these events have probably brought forth concerns in your mind to the readiness of our police department to respond, handle and prevent these kinds of occurrences,” Knight said.

Emergency situations on campus require “continuous and ongoing preparation and training,” Knight said, which the department has had with the San Bernardino county Sheriff's Department and on their own, including “firearm training, active shooter response, crime scene investigation, traffic collision investigation, community policing and all other continual training requirements.”

Last month the department conducted active shooter scenarios, in which they went into every building and announced the drill, allowing staff the opportunity to practice their response to an emergency situation.

Knight said “one of the most important concepts” of the department's efforts is “campus community engagement,” and remaining informed of any safety issues that are a concern for staff and students on campus.

In reference to a VVC campus safety report reviewing the last three years, Knight said that the only violent incident on record is a robbery, in which the individual was arrested on campus.

Associated Student Body President Gabrielle Galindo told Knight that it was a “Concern” for the student body council that the persons in charge of their buildings on campus, the buildings on campus, the building emergency coordinators, “would know what to do” in a crisis. Knight responded that since holding the exercises last month, the staff “were able to understand the importance of communicating” and are prepared to respond to emergency situations on campus.

Board member Brandon Wood noted that workshops and training for staff and students to learn what they can individually to remain out of danger are important to campus safety.

“I think that people can learn to be observant and to not be an attractive victim,” Wood said.

Knight agreed and noted that the police department holds informational safety workshops for students annually in the Student Activities Center.

Board member John Pinkerton thanked Knight for his presentation Tuesday and said he personally feels safe on campus with the police department's service.

"It seems to me that this is the safest place for young people to be right here on our campus," Pinkerton said.

"It is," Knight said in response.

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