

9/28/2010

Active Shooter/Suicide After Action Report



Police Department
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

September 28, 2010

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Active Shooter/Suicide on The University of Texas at Austin Campus

On the morning of September 28, 2010, a sophomore mathematics student, Colton J. Tooley, boarded a city bus headed for The University of Texas at Austin campus. He wore a white hooded sweatshirt over a black business suit and tie. He carried a backpack with something that looked like rolled up white butcher paper protruding from it. At 8:08 a.m., he exited the bus one block southwest of the campus. He walked east and then turned north toward 21st street. On his way, he removed an AK-47 from within the rolled up paper in his backpack, took off his sweatshirt, rolled a black ski mask on top of his head, and discarded his backpack and contents into a trash dumpster. Once he was on 21st street, which leads to one of the busiest intersections on campus, he started firing. He fired a total of 11 shots at three different locations. He fired some shots in the ground, some at a building wall and others in the air, but he did not fire at any person he encountered on the way to his destination. As he passed the 21st Street information kiosk, Tooley began to jog toward the front of the Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL). Before he entered the library, he pulled the ski-mask down over his face. He sped up again and started to run, but not before waving to a guard sitting at the front desk. Colton J. Tooley passed a computer lab with students on his right, and proceeded to the elevator hall where he took the stairwell up to the sixth floor. He sat down at a table with cubicle partitions, and fired his last shot, the 12th round, killing himself.



Figure 1: Colton J. Tooley entering the Perry-Castañeda Library

Part 1: Executive Summary of Event

Part 1.1: History

Several tragic incidents in the United States have caused colleges and universities, along with law enforcement, to adapt policies and procedures to keep our citizenry safe. They include:

- ***The UT Tower shooting*** - On Monday, August 1, 1966, a former marine and student of The University of Texas at Austin went to the 29th floor of the university Tower and began shooting people below. Charles Whitman killed 16 people and injured 32 others before law enforcement shot and killed him that day. *This incident became the catalyst for university police departments in Texas and SWAT teams around the country to form and train.*
- ***The Columbine High School massacre*** - On Tuesday, April 20, 1999 two high school seniors, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, went on a shooting spree, killing 13 people and injuring 21 others before taking their own lives. *This incident became a catalyst for current active shooter responses, specifically that law enforcement cannot wait for the SWAT to respond while people are being killed.*
- ***September 11, 2001*** – On this Tuesday, 19 al-Qaeda terrorist hijacked four commercial jet airliners, flying two of those into the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York City, NY, one into the Pentagon in Washington DC, and another went down in a field in Pennsylvania. *This incident provided many lessons learned for first responders in the way communication and incident command structures are managed.*
- ***The Virginia Tech massacre*** - On Monday, April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people and wounded many others in a planned suicide attack on the Virginia Tech Campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. *This incident provided additional lessons learned on communication and warning systems for universities around the country.*

The University of Texas at Austin's own tragic history and our attentiveness to lessons learned in other catastrophic cases of violence over the years helped prepare the institution and its police force for what happened on September 28, 2010.

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Part 1.2: Overview of The University of Texas at Austin Campus and the Police Department

The University of Texas at Austin is one of the largest public universities in the United States and is the largest institution of The University of Texas System. Located in the heart of the city the campus is less than one mile from the State Capitol.

Founded in 1883, the university has grown from a single building, eight teachers, two departments and 221 students to a 350-acre main campus with 17 colleges and schools, about 24,000 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, more than 50,000 students, and approximately 5,000 visitors a day.

The university's reach goes far beyond the borders of the main campus with satellite campuses and research centers across Texas, including the J.J. Pickle Research Campus and the Brackenridge tract in Austin, the Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, and the McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis, Texas.



Figure 2: The university Tower at sunrise

The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD) was founded in 1968 (a response to the Charles Whitman shooting). The department has the same authority and responsibilities as most municipal police organizations and has challenges unique to a large, nationally recognized university community. UTPD employs over 130 individuals and 65 are sworn police officers. The officers patrol over 400 acres in central Austin and surrounding university properties 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Part 1.3: September 28, 2010 Timeline/Timestamp

TIMELINE/TIMESTAMP	
•	8:12 am First report of shooter comes into the Austin Police Department (APD) and the UT Police Department 911 centers
•	8:13:21 am All UTPD units dispatched to a possible active shooter east bound on 21 st Street
•	8:16:31 am First three units arrive at the door of PCL, two APD officers and one UT police officer
•	8:16:37 am First report that a person with a gun has entered PCL
•	8:17 am Three more UTPD officers enter PCL and go to the 6 th level, one officer was left to secure the lobby
•	8:18 am UTPD supervisors arrive and the incident command center is established
•	8:18 am Associate VP for Campus Safety and Security contacts PIO
•	8:19 am 1 st text alert issued to students, staff and faculty "Armed subject reported last seen at Perry-Castañeda Library on 9/28/2010. Details to follow."
•	8:20 am PIO takes press calls en route (in car)
•	8:20 am University Emergency Operation Centers (UTPD EOC and ECC at the Stark Library) open
•	8:20 am Head of facility planning and operation for PCL evacuates the building
•	8:20 am Four more UTPD officers enter PCL, go up to the 6 th level
•	8:22 am Three more UTPD officers enter PCL, secure downstairs lobby
•	8:22-8:25 am Sixth floor PCL swept, a body is found, law enforcement begins effort to rule out reports/descriptions of others
•	8:25 am Campus siren and loudspeaker sounded (announcements every 10 minutes) directing faculty, staff, and students into buildings for campus lockdown
•	8:30 am 1 st UTPD Facebook post
•	8:35 am Press briefing close to scene conducted by PIO
•	8:37 am First campus-wide e-mail alert from VP for University Operations is sent. "Armed subject last seen at Perry-Castañeda Library and UTC. Shelter in place. UTPD responding."
•	8:37 am, 8:44 am, 8:48 am, Emergency Web page posting directs campus to stay in buildings while police investigate
•	8:41 am 2nd text alert issued, Student Government "be safe" Facebook posting, updated UTPD Facebook site and emergency Web page. "armed subject reported last seen at PERRY-CASTANEDA LIBRARY SHELTER

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IN PLACE STAY WHERE YOU ARE AT MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:50 am Emergency information (lockdown) displayed on all campus televisions (cable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 am PIO conducts phone interviews with other Texas markets and national outlets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:05 am, 9:11 am, 9:44 am University home page summary updates (continue in lockdown, police ruling out second suspect)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:07 am Twitter update (Public Affairs and UTPD provided information for update)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:12 am, 9:43 am, 10:08 am Emergency Web page update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:15 am 1-800 line activated for parents and concerned individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:25 am 9:43 am, 9:48 am Home page updates (continue in lockdown)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:27 am Twitter update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 am PIO conducts press update (advises public to stay away from the area while police search/rule out second suspect)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:43 am Emergency page update “A suspected shooter in PCL library is dead. Law enforcement are searching for a second suspect. If you are off campus, STAY AWAY. If you are on campus, lock doors, do not leave your building.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:44 am Social media update “Law enforcement still searching for second suspect on campus. STAY AWAY from campus or remain locked in your building!”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:52 am E-mail from the University of Texas President “In the interest of keeping you up to date on the current emergency, I want you to know that the campus remains locked down. All students, faculty, staff, and visitors should stay indoors and continue to follow instructions (from loudspeakers, email, text messages, and uniformed police officers). You will be notified when the situation becomes stable. The armed suspect is dead. No other injuries have been reported. All organized classes for today, September 28, are cancelled. Please continue to monitor email and the UT home page for updates. Thank you for your cooperation. Bill Powers”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:08 am Emergency page update “A suspected shooter in PCL library is dead. Law enforcement are searching for a second suspect. If you are off campus, STAY AWAY. If you are on campus, lock doors, do not leave your building. All organized classes for today,

September 28, are canceled.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:13 am Facebook page update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:18 am, 12:10 pm 3rd and 4th text alert issued
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:38 am First multi-agency press conference (UTPD Chief, APD Chief, University President and Austin Mayor) at media post outside perimeter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:25 am, 11:48 am, 12:06 pm Facebook pages updated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:06 pm. E-mail from University President “As we secure the main campus, continue to follow instructions from the UT Police regarding when you may leave your building. These instructions will be provided through official communications channels. Once the occupants of a building have been informed that they may leave, those students, faculty, and staff are free to go home - with the exception of those employees who work in critical services. Classes for today are cancelled and will resume tomorrow, September 29. Employees will receive paid emergency leave. Thank you for your cooperation. Bill Powers President”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:23 pm All-clear announcement via text alert, over loudspeaker, posted on Emergency page,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:46 pm Facebook page update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 1 pm Second press conference (UTPD Chief, APD Chief, Pres. Powers, Austin Mayor) held at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center

Part 1.4: Summary of Findings

Below is a summary review of the university’s response outlined in two categories: 1) What worked well, and 2) challenges during the event. More details regarding each functional area’s response, evaluation of what succeeded, and observations and recommendations for what needs to be improved in that area can be found in “Part 2: Functional Area Review” (page 7).

What Worked Well on September 28

- Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command:*** The primary responding officers understood the ICS, implemented it effectively, and complied with its provisions. The command post and the ICS was established within minutes of the first 911 call. Other supporting agencies, operated clearly within the ICS framework and the system

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expanded as the incident continued. The leadership and unified command proved to be invaluable during this multi-jurisdictional response.

- ***Multi-Agency Support.*** The management and integration of the multi-agency resources and the cooperation of surrounding agencies exceeded expectations. The public safety agencies of several nearby jurisdictions lent their support and their resources to UTPD. While we work frequently with our partners in the community, the response to this incident revealed the total scope and extent of support available throughout the Austin Metro area.
- ***Preparation/Training.*** Due to the possibility of an active shooter assault on campus, we gave particular attention to this type of event in our emergency planning process and UTPD pursued an aggressive preparedness plan for such an event. For example, procurement and maintenance of active shooter equipment is a priority for the department. On the day of the shooting, our officers were secure in the knowledge that they were well equipped and rehearsed for such an occurrence.

Our law enforcement partners and other first responders in the Austin Metro area work with us regularly to assure safety during events of local prominence and shared jurisdictional interest, (e.g., Presidential and Heads of State visits, local celebrations such as Mardi Gras and Halloween, local events such as Longhorn (UT) Football). We also regularly participate in training exercises hosted by one another. The value of routinely working together on large, high profile events cannot be overstated. All this and more contributed to the successful response to the Active Shooter/Suicide on September 28, 2011.

- ***Emergency Communication/Notification.*** Following the incident at Virginia Tech, UTPD took a hard look at their emergency communication and warning systems. Multiple channels for emergency notifications were used on September 28 and although not all were initiated flawlessly, the first form of communication/notification occurred within minutes of the first 911 call and regular updates through all communications channels occurred every 5 to 15 minutes during the four-hour lockdown. The university used all of the following emergency communication tools during this event:
 - a. text alerts (sent by dispatch);
 - b. audible siren system (staffed by dispatch);
 - c. social networks (Facebook and Twitter managed by University Operations and Public Affairs staff);
 - d. email (sent by University Operations staff and the President's Office);
 - e. Web pages (managed by University Operations and Public Affairs staff);
 - f. DEVIS (campus closed cable; managed by ITS and emergency preparedness staff);
 - g. Emergin pager system (sent by dispatch);
 - h. AtHoc:computer pop-up alerts (managed by ITS and emergency preparedness staff); and
 - i. local/national media (Public Information Officer (PIO) and Public Affairs sent advisories and held regular briefings).

Messages provided information on what was happening with the police response and instructions on what to do. UTPD and other responding departments maintained communications with the community throughout the incident.

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Challenges During the Event

The goal is always perfect execution of the plan but this rarely happens. Below we've highlighted areas that were particularly challenging during this event—our “lessons learned.” More detailed descriptions of the university's observations and recommendations can be found in “Part 2: Functional Area Review” (page 7).

- **Communications:** Many aspects of command communications proved to be problematic. From the first response, the choice of the proper radio channel for our multi-jurisdictional response proved to be challenging for three reasons:
 - a. Not everyone got the message to switch to the selected channel
 - b. UTPD dispatch could not monitor or transmit on the channel selected
 - c. The command post did not know that not everyone had switched to the chosen channel

Although this initial complication was remedied in minutes, it is worthy of noting and correcting for future incidents.

Communication between the command post, and the emergency operations center and the communications center was deficient in that officers at the post were not keeping the EOC and communications center regularly apprised of the situation as the response progressed. This was remedied when the Assistant Chief arrived at the command post and supported the communication efforts of the incident commander.

Although we succeeded in communicating quickly and frequently with the campus and local community, we initially had some issues activating our siren alert system. After sending the first text message (in all caps), the communications operator attempted to activate the siren. The siren password is case sensitive (upper and lower case) so there was a

slight delay (minutes) before the communications center realized what was causing the malfunction. This multi-jurisdiction event challenged coordination between UTPD and APD communications center in that a primary dispatcher was not identified.

There also were language issues. Specifically, the general emergency terms we used (shelter-in-place; lockdown) were confusing and not completely understood by the public.

Even terms used by the Command Post (CP) were confusing to some members of the search teams. Understand that these teams included individuals from different agencies (e.g., UTPD, Austin Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, etc.). We found that officers from the different agencies may use the same language but with different meaning. For example, command staff instructed search teams to “clear” assigned buildings. To some team members “clear” meant evacuate the building when command's intent for the word “clear” was to clear the building of any potential suspects.

The number of calls received on hard lines to non-emergency phone lines in UTPD's communications center is unknown. The phone system for the center functions differently than a typical municipal 911 system. If someone dials 911 from a cell phone, the call goes to the Austin Police Department who notifies UTPD of the issue. If someone dials 911 from a campus phone, the call goes to the UTPD's communications center. If someone dials the direct line (512-471-4441), which employees of the university are accustomed to doing, the call goes to UTPD. The center only has three lines and there is no “roll-over” to Austin's 911 or recorded messaging system in place to capture unanswered calls.

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- **Fixed and Mobile Command:** Our initial location of the command post was acceptable, however as the scope of the event grew, the location was within the perimeter of the incident. The City of Austin mobile command vehicle was invaluable to the post operations, but space was limited inside the vehicle. Consideration should have been made to use hard cover, such as a nearby building.

Some of our critical (non-police) personnel were confused when the first alert went out. They did not know if they should follow instructions and “shelter in place” or respond to the emergency operations center (EOC). This has been remedied by clarifying which university staff members need to respond to the EOC during a critical incident.

- **Media:** Media reaction was immediate. Camera crews arrived almost as fast as outside law enforcement. A safe perimeter and media area were quickly established, but it was located some distance from the command post. This and the challenges with cell phone coverage made communication with the agency PIO difficult. It is important that the PIO receive accurate information in a timely manner. The university has since issued radios to the PIOs and staff in Student Affairs to mitigate this issue.

Media requests continued for at least 72 hours after the event and inundated the Chief of Police. For future events of this scope and duration, media briefings will be managed to optimize the Chief’s and other spokespersons’ time.

- **Staffing:** UTPD has limited staffing of officers and communications center operators. Had this event gone on for multiple operational periods or if a second or third

event occurred simultaneously, staffing would have been a real issue.

The communications center has since added three new dispatchers.

Part 2: Functional Area Review

Six functional areas of the university’s response team (First Response, Command Post, Crime Scene, Emergency Operations Center, Communications Center-Dispatch, and Public Information Officer) reviewed the September 28, 2010 incident and reported their findings. The following is a brief description of each area’s response, where they felt they succeeded, and observations and recommendations for improvement.

Part 2.1: First Response

When the first reports of “man with a gun” came in on September 28, all command personnel (lieutenants and above) were in a weekly meeting at the police station. The command staff immediately responded to the scene, an order for all officers to “gear-up” was given, and most responding officers were equipped with M-4 rifles. Lt. James Gabriel acted as the on-scene commander and ordered dispatch to notify Austin Police Department (APD) that we were implementing a campus plan to shut down campus to traffic.



Figure 3: Search team prepares to enter Jester residence hall (photo by Ralph Barrera, *Austin American-Statesman*)

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Witnesses told responding officers that the gunman entered PCL and headed up the stairwell to the 6th floor. Initially, two APD officers and one UTPD officer responded cautiously to the 6th floor. Approximately one minute later, four more officers responded inside PCL. Three headed to the 6th floor, while one was left on the ground floor to secure the lobby.

Approximately 10 minutes into the response, the first team that entered the 6th floor announced that the gunman was believed to be deceased. A commander ordered that the search of the building continue in case there was another gunman. Responding officers directed building occupants to evacuate PCL. Outside, responding officers were directing people away from PCL and into other buildings. The campus siren sounded approximately 15 minutes later and instructed the public to “shelter in place.” This siren sounded every 10 minutes.

The on-scene commander, advised two APD officers to stay with the body, while the search of PCL continued. UTPD Captain Don Verett arrived on the 6th floor and assumed command of the interior crime scene.



Figure 4: Officers in an APD emergency response vehicle—an “armored bear cat” (photo by Ralph Barrera, *Austin American-Statesman*)

Various descriptions of the gunman and other reports of a possible second gunman were reported to the communications center as a perimeter was being established. A UTPD Commander met with APD responding Chief of Police and the APD Chief asked that responding officers move to a common radio channel. The

APD Chief also called for the City of Austin (COA) Mobile Command Vehicle.

Part 2.1.1 First Response - What Worked Well

- ***Incident Command Post*** - The quick implementation of the incident command post was imperative to the successful management of the multi-agency response. The command presence was established within minutes of the first call and made it possible to work toward the incident command objectives as they were identified.

Due to the proximity of the event, there was a mix of responding and self-assigned law enforcement agencies. The set-up of the perimeter provided responding law enforcement with information on where to go and helped with accountability.

- ***Sound Operational Strategy and Tactics*** - Trained and experienced university officers, city police officers and other law enforcement officers were in place immediately and accountable, and the cooperation among multiple law enforcement agencies was exceptional.
- ***Campus emergency communication plans*** - The call from the incident commander to shut down campus and the collaboration with UTPD Emergency Operation Center (EOC) on implementing the plan was quick and efficient.

Communication of our plans through the university’s professional chain of command, up and to the UT President (Chiefs, Captains, AVP, VP, President, officers and staff) worked very well.

- ***Preparation and training*** - Prior training and planning by UTPD including the multi-agency regional active shooter training and drills contributed to the successful coordination and teamwork of all the law enforcement personnel.

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Part 2.1.2. First Response Observations and Recommendations

FIRST RESPONSE	
Observations	Recommendations
After the event was over, we found out that the switch to a common radio channel was confusing for three reasons: 1. Not everyone got the message to switch channels. 2. UTPD dispatch could not monitor or transmit on the common radio frequency chosen. 3. The command post did not know that not everyone had switched to the chosen channel.	Use the pre-identified law channels for multi-jurisdictional responses.
Inability to access equipment in vehicles in a timely manner.	Review internal processes.
Unable to move emergency vehicles which were initially parked to block traffic.	Review alternate procedures and access the risk.
Too few communication operators.	Hire one additional operator per shift.
PBX stations were limited and (512)471-4441 calls did not roll over, they just kept ringing.	Calls that could not be answered should roll over to a recording that advises the caller to call 911 if it's an emergency.
Trained and untrained staff was used to take the incoming calls.	Conduct PBX training for additional staff.
First responder equipment was picked up on a first-come basis and did not follow practiced plan.	Analyze resource allocation for emergency response and procure additional equipment.
Media camera crews arrived almost as fast as outside law enforcement personnel.	Establish a perimeter and identify a safe media area as quickly as possible.

Part 2.2: Command Post

Lt. Gonzalo Gonzalez was the initial incident commander and established a command post at Inner Campus Drive and Speedway, north of PCL. The Command Post was set-up in the UTPD command vehicle. The officers directed witnesses to Gregory Gym, which was east of the command post.

At approximately 8:40 a.m. a decision was made that the on-scene commander would become the incident commander and the original incident commander would assume the role of operations section chief (OSC). In addition, the Austin Police Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety (TXDPS) assigned two deputy operation chiefs. Once the City of Austin (COA) mobile command post arrived, unified command relocated inside the vehicle. The majority of

responding officers were APD. Other resources from various agencies were identified. These agencies included, TXDPS, Austin Independent School District Police, Texas Rangers, and UT System Police. Three objectives were established by unified command with the reports of a possible second suspect:

1. Maintain the safety and security of the community in and around the perimeter
2. Hold a perimeter and shelter the community while searching all campus buildings; and
3. Preserve the crime scene



Figure 5: Lt. Gonzalez and APD Chief Art Acevedo at the initial command post (photo by Larry Kolvoord, *Austin American-Statesman*)

The OSC directed the building searches for the possible second suspect and assigned law enforcement teams to clear the buildings within the perimeter. The OSC had two scribes that recorded the agencies, and names of officers in each team. They assigned each building and recorded the time the team was deployed and the time they returned to the command post. The intention was to assign a UTPD officer with each team because they could provide familiarity with the location and the layout of the buildings being searched. The OSC kept the unified command apprised of the teams' progress. The search continued for approximately three hours. The unified command continued to monitor activity, set objectives, supply operations and logistics with resources, and work to complete the radio patches to a common channel.

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Figure 6 K-9 unit conducting campus search (photo by Larry Kolvoord, *Austin American-Statesman*)

At approximately 12:20 p.m., unified command shrank the perimeter as buildings were searched and cleared of any suspects. They also developed a demobilization plan that included a staggered release of students, faculty, and staff inside buildings. UTPD used the siren system voice over to direct the release of the community starting with the north side of campus. The command post was closed at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Part 2.2.1 Command - What Worked Well

- **Rapid response** - An incident command post (ICP) was established within minutes of the first call and the need for the mobile command post was quickly realized and arrived soon after.
- **Communications** – Information and intelligence sharing between agencies at the incident command post and in field operations was effective.
- **Preparation and training** - The qualified personnel trained in incident command systems and were beneficial to the overall management of the event.
- **Multi-agency support** - The willingness to help and the quick response of the outside agencies was outstanding. All of the agencies blended quickly to create teams and accomplish common goals.

Part 2.2.2. Command Observations and Recommendations

COMMAND POST	
Observations	Recommendations
The siren system kept going off every ten minutes and it was so loud that the commanders at the incident command post had difficulties communicating with each other.	The siren should be sounded regularly, but the two minute duration should be shortened.
The public address message, “shelter in place, until <i>all clear</i> is given” was confusing because the public focused on the “all clear” part of the message instead of the entirety of the message.	Improve quality of voice-over on siren system. Review, revise and simplify messaging to ensure the intended action can be identified by the general public.
Although the weather was mild (mid 70’s from 10am to noon), the officers in the search teams were hauling heavy equipment and they were taking the stairs which caused some exhaustion.	Establishment of indoor rehabilitation location and having a supply of water would allow for better rehabilitation. Water was provided two hours into the event.
Although the intention to assign a UTPD officer with each team to provide building knowledge was well received, it proved to be challenging because UTPD did not initially have adequate staffing. Outside law enforcement officers relieved UTPD officers, who were on the perimeter on the outside of PCL.	Increase the staffing levels of UTPD commissioned officers.
The location of the command post was too close to the inner perimeter and needed to be relocated where hard cover could be utilized.	Review and refine decision process for the establishment of the command post.
The COA mobile command vehicle proved to be invaluable but it was not big enough to hold everyone that responded to the scene, who wanted to be involved in the decision making process.	Review and confirm roles of essential personnel for emergencies and agree on representation and use as a reference during emergencies.
Confusion in terminology of “clearing” versus “evacuating” a building by some search teams.	Ensure understanding of terminology by all personnel.
Communication between ICP and dispatch was limited.	Assign an ICS trained dispatcher to command post.

Part 2.3: Crime Scene/Investigation

A team of UTPD and APD officers secured the PCL crime scene within minutes. Shortly after the scene was secured, the officers who had been dispatched to the first “man with a gun” call, were dispatched to a possible second gunman, from reports that began coming into dispatch.

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Officers identified 17 witnesses and moved them to a secure location inside of Gregory Gym, which was adjacent to the incident command post. The APD commander apprised the UTPD sergeant of the assets APD could provide to assist, including a Capital Metro bus and 15 homicide detectives. A plan was made to bus the witnesses to the APD Main Headquarters (less than 1.5 miles away) where the detectives would take statements. While the bus was en route to pick up the witnesses, three UTPD detectives took verbal statements from the witnesses. The detectives tried to determine if there was credible information regarding a second suspect. The witness statements varied but were similar enough to believe there was only a single gunman.



Figure 7: Witnesses boarding a Capitol Metro bus (photo by Alberto Martinez, *Austin American-Statesman*)

While the initial interviews were taking place, the UTPD sergeant was informed that a search team K-9 officer had seen an apparent firearm inside a vehicle while conducting a sweep of parked cars. The discovery of the apparent firearm led to a coordinated response between the Austin Regional Intelligence Center and UTPD. The owner of the vehicle was identified (a student), the student's class schedule was obtained, and the student was located and was safely and discreetly removed from his class. The officers inspected the student's car and determined the item in question was a facsimile rifle.

Shortly thereafter, the Capital Metro bus arrived and the UTPD detectives escorted the witnesses to the pick-up location where they boarded the bus and were transported to the APD Main Headquarters.

A UTPD detective then went to the PCL video room to view the security footage and determine if one or more shooters entered. Staff members from Information Technology Services (ITS) and PCL assisted with obtaining the video footage that verified that only one person with a gun had entered.



Figure 8: APD and UTPD Officers collecting evidence (photo by Ralph Barrera, *Austin American-Statesman*)

The UTPD detectives went to the scene, at the 6th floor of the PCL. The UTPD captain, several APD homicide detectives, Texas Rangers, and the UTPD Joint Terrorist Task Force officer were already on scene. UTPD and APD agreed that they would work together on the investigation and that APD would take custody of the physical evidence and process it at their laboratory. UTPD detectives coordinated with UT Facilities Services and UT Environmental Health & Safety to obtain the bullet lodged in the ceiling. The Medical Examiner's Office Investigators arrived and took possession of the body. APD officers were dispatched to the residence (off-campus) of the deceased to check the welfare of other residents and to inform the next of kin (parents). The APD officers performed a consent search and seizure of property within the deceased's bedroom. APD set up a barricade at the cul-de-sac entrance of the residence to keep the media out.

A UTPD detectives joined APD officers at the residence of Colton J. Tooley and were briefed by the APD units on scene. The detectives then met with Tooley's parents.

On September 29th, UTPD detectives attended the autopsy of Colton J. Tooley where two live rounds were retrieved from his clothing.

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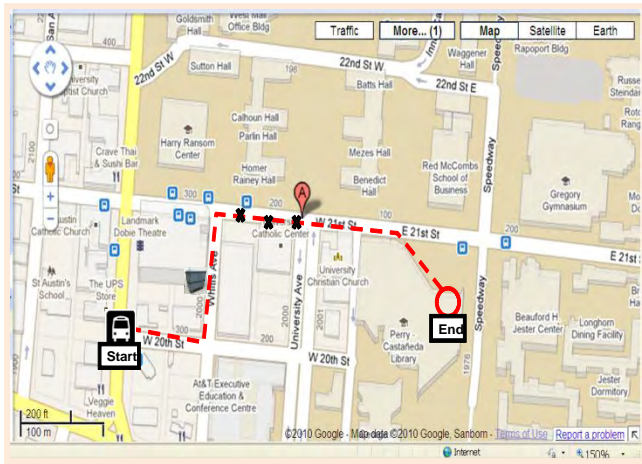


Figure 9: Colton Tooley's route

Later that same day, a joint law enforcement briefing was held at the APD Main Headquarters. APD detectives, APD computer forensics technicians, the head of Capital Metro security, and UTPD crime investigative unit members were in attendance. Capital Metro shared the bus footage of Tooley with UTPD. APD canvassed the area where the deceased exited the bus and the path he traveled to PCL for witnesses and/or video footage. The original information provided from Capital Metro indicated Tooley had exited a bus at the intersection of 21st Street and Guadalupe Street (which would be a straight walk to the PCL), but upon viewing the video it was observed that he actually got off at 20th Street (a block southwest from the PCL). There were several area searches done around 21st Street the day of the incident, but not in the block south of 21st. After the joint meeting, UTPD detectives searched the new route and found a hooded sweatshirt, the individual's backpack, containing among other things his laptop and a notebook in a trash bin.

When the UTPD detectives delivered the laptop to APD Computer Forensics staff for analysis, they were given the cell phones taken from Tooley and his parents along with a report regarding the cell phone data. During the following weeks, UTPD and APD worked together to process the digital information obtained from the computer and cell phones.

UTPD asked faculty to translate the various foreign language writings found in the notebook.

While no clear motive or triggering effect was ever discovered, the information formed a clearer picture of who Colton J. Tooley was and his state of mind.

Part 2.3.1 Crime Scene/Investigation – What Worked Well

- **Multi-agency support** - UTPD is a medium-sized police department, so it was invaluable to have the full resources and cooperation of APD and other agencies during the investigation of the case.

Within minutes of the initial call going out, detectives from both APD and TDPS were on scene ready to assist. Within 30 minutes of the call going out, investigators from those agencies, plus the Texas Rangers, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the UT System Office of the Director of Police were on site to offer support.

The joint investigative effort proceeded in an efficient and professional matter. Everyone pulled together to get the matter handled quickly and thoroughly.

The immediate response to the September 28, 2010 event and the subsequent investigations are a testament to the cooperative partnerships that UTPD has fostered with the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

Part 2.3.2 Crime Scene/Investigation Observations and Recommendations

No recommendations for this functional area.

Part 2.4 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The University of Texas Emergency Operation Center (EOC) was established at 8:20 a.m. at the University Police Building (UPB) under the command of Dr. Gerald R. Harkins, the associate vice president of Campus Safety and Security. Dr. Harkins was the first to arrive at the EOC and Assistant Chief of Police Terry McMahan acted as the police liaison in the EOC. The director of Emergency Preparedness and a senior program

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director arrived soon after to also staff the EOC, and they activated the staffing call list to include:

- Assistant Dean of Students
- The Associate Vice President of the Human Resource Services (HRS)
- Associate Director of Facility Services
- Safety Specialist of the Division of Housing and Food Services
- UT Fire Marshal
- Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety



Figure 10: UT Safety Alert on campus closed cable (photo by Rebecca Scoggin McEntee, *Austin American-Statesman*)

(campus closed cable), AtHoc (desktop notification), Emergin (paging system) and the University Emergency Website.

This was the first time social media was used for notifications and it was effective. Our partners in public affairs and the University Operations Web team continuously updated Facebook and Twitter during the event. The UTPD Facebook page went from 469 “likes” on September 27 to 10, 313 on September 29.

Additional duties carried out by EOC staff included obtaining investigative information in reference to students and staff, and assisting with procedures for closing the campus. Once the secondary investigation started, they helped in

obtaining evidence from the crime scene and coordinated the clean-up operation.

The communication and information flow between the UTPD police and the EOC was maintained directly between Dr. Harkins and UTPD Captain Julie Gillespie who assumed the role of the police liaison in the EOC from the assistant chief when he went to the scene. The assistant chief's presence on the scene proved essential from the perspective of university needs and police requirements. The associate vice president for Campus Safety and Security was able to get timely information from the scene on the incident as it unfolded to make necessary notifications and decisions regarding the university community.

The EOC remained fully staffed until 2:00 p.m. and remained open until 5:30 p.m.

Part 2.4.1 EOC - What Worked Well

- **Rapid response** -The EOC was established in a prompt and efficient manner.
- **Communications** – The EOC regularly updated university administration and the campus community through numerous communications channels as the event progressed.
- **Administrative resources** – The EOC was able to marshal critical university resources when needed.

Part 2.4.2 EOC – Observations and Recommendations

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER	
Observations	Recommendations
The faculty response to the emergency varied widely.	Create and implement a uniform emergency and safety preparedness program for faculty members in emergency situations.
The emergency operations plans and the human resource services worked together but were not pre-coordinated.	Improve and update call center emergency phone numbers, emergency operation communication and resources to direct people efficiently in an emergency.

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The emotional affect on the staff varied widely and it was important to monitor for any extreme cases.	Be cognizant of ongoing emotional needs of staff and provide group and individual counseling support.
Some emergency staff were confused on the choice to respond to the UTPD EOC or "shelter in place."	Set expectations for staffing of UTPD EOC from internal staff.
Training and drill facilitated a good EOC response.	Continue to train and practice drills on a set schedule.
A UT Office of Public Affairs representative was not represented in the UTPD EOC and it would have helped with the communication to the university executives.	A UT Office of Public Affairs representative should be added to the EOC membership and call list.
Some personnel left campus, because they were not identified as essential, although their job duties were essential for an adequate response to an emergency.	Re-evaluate specific job duties that are essential in an emergency and identify the personnel. Update emergency plan to reflect findings.

Part 2.5: Communications Center-Dispatch

The first emergency call was reported to the UTPD Communication Center at 8:12 a.m. UTPD has two operable dispatch consoles. The primary dispatcher received the first telephone call and the second dispatcher assisted. All units were dispatched immediately. The center was inundated with telephone calls, so additional personnel were summoned to answer calls. The two communication operators concentrated on radio traffic. UTPD had previously trained civilian personnel so in the event of an emergency, they could assist and they did.



Figure 11: UT text alert

Between 8:10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., UTPD received 14 911 calls and 511 calls to the non-emergency campus number (1-4441). Most 911 calls were made from cell phones and were taken at the APD

communications center. UTPD is part of the Capitol Area Planning Council of Government and 911 calls are routed depending on the tower a

cell phone hits. The calls continued to come in throughout the event. All telephone calls out from the communication center had to be made on cell phones because the landlines were tied up with incoming calls.

The dispatchers at UTPD are trained in various communications channels meant to notify the university community of emergencies. On this date, initial warning communications were activated via text messaging, siren and the DEVIS system (campus closed circuit TV) by the communication operators. Once the EOC was operational, warning communications and updates were sent from that location.

Law enforcement communication was coordinated between UTPD and APD. In the early stages of the event, command selected an encrypted radio channel not available to the UTPD communications center. Coordination between UTPD and APD improved as radio channels were patched as a solution.

Once additional police personnel began arriving, dispatchers were maintaining communication on two channels with officers at the event, as well as officers responding to outlying locations. Medical emergencies were handled; however, general calls for service outside the event, such as security alarms, were disregarded. The UT Fire Safety Shop monitored their fire alarms.

The UTPD Communication Center was the focal point for information. The amount of communication coming in and the amount needing to go out was overwhelming for two dispatchers and three PBX operators. There were only three landlines taking incoming calls. The number of calls that went unanswered or that were dropped is unknown. The noise level and distractions became a factor as more people arrived and tried to obtain information.

Part 2.5.1 Communication Center-Dispatch – What Worked Well

- **Timely communication and notification** - Overall the notification systems were used

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efficiently and effectively to get timely information to the campus.

The use of multiple communication channels worked well. The *Austin American Statesman* stated that “UT used everything but carrier pigeons” in trying to get information to their community.

There were multiple communication devices used simultaneously (pagers, cell phones, computers) without incident. The center’s new text system sent texts to 54,000 cell phones without fail.

Part 2.5.2 Dispatch Communication – Observations and Recommendations

DISPATCH COMMUNICATION	
Observations	Recommendations
The PBX phones were overwhelmed with incoming calls, no outgoing calls were possible.	The communication supervisor’s phone system should be set up as an alternate PBX station in order to have the capability to take, transfer and make calls. Create a designated outbound phone for emergencies.
There were too many people in the communication center which created noise and distractions for the dispatchers.	Provide a radio and move non-essential individuals into the main EOC.
It was difficult to hear in dispatch center because the PBX is located so close to the dispatcher work desk.	Make headsets available to the dispatchers.
Initially, the siren did not work for two reasons. The first was because the computer due to a password malfunction (caps lock was on). The dispatcher could not get the siren to work from the back areas because they were on the wrong computer.	A more accessible stand alone system for the sirens and then relocate the siren system controls on the dispatch console.
UTPD and APD dispatch did not coordinate well; conflicting messages and a lead or primary dispatcher was not identified.	Improve the coordination between UTPD dispatch center and APD dispatch.
The closed circuit TV System (DEVIS) did not work when the secondary dispatcher tried to log in. Once the system was activated, no local news channels were available, since they were superseded by the EM message.	Review and refine process and change the procedure so that a pre-determined local news channel is available.
Radio channels were being used during the emergency for non-emergency communications.	A message should go out to everyone with radios on different channels (Police Department, Parking and

	Transportation, Facilities) letting them know to clear communication channels for the emergency.
Multiple personnel contacted off-duty staff to respond.	Coordinate the process of calling in the off-duty UTPD shifts.
Confusion on what notification systems had been activated.	A prioritized checklist of the planned notification system with times activated.

Part 2.6: Public Information Officer (PIO)

On the morning of September 28, 2010, both the UTPD Chief of Police, Robert Dahlstrom, and Public Information Officer (PIO) Rhonda Weldon, were off campus when the first call came into 911. Both the Chief and PIO were contacted and the PIO was briefed by the Associated Vice President for Campus Safety and Security. The PIO took media calls on route to campus.



Figure 12: PIO Rhonda Weldon briefs the press (photo by Catenya McHenry, KXAN)

When the PIO arrived at command post at 8:35 a.m., she was updated and proceeded to the media post at 21st Street and Whitis where she gave her first media briefing. At 9:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., the PIO had provided additional information via press briefings. At 10:38 a.m., the university president, Austin mayor, APD chief and the UTPD chief gave a press briefing at the media post.

This press conference was a very basic overview of what had occurred up to that point:

1. We have a deceased suspect from an apparent suicide
2. There were multiple shots fired on campus and just off campus, but no one else was injured
3. The university is still in lock down while the police department continue

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- to follow-up on further information and secure buildings
4. The name, etc. of the suspect will not be revealed until positive identification is provided by the medical examiner

The next press conference was conducted at approximately 1 p.m. at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center. This location was one of two locations (LBJ Library is the second location) pre-chosen for press conferences for any major event on campus. These locations were chosen because the buildings are equipped with the necessary technology, parking is accessible to satellite trucks and other press vehicles, and both locations are also on the outer edge of campus for easy ingress and egress for the press corps.



Figure 13: President Bill Powers, Mayor Lee Lefingwell, UTPD Chief Robert Dahlstrom, and APD Chief Art Acevedo conduct a press conference near the scene (photo by Ralph Barrera, *Austin American-Statesman*)

During this briefing the university reassured faculty, staff, students and parents that the campus was now safe, no one other than the gunman was injured, and police were relatively sure that the gunman was one of our students, but were waiting on the medical examiner for a positive identification.

Over the next two days, the UTPD Chief of Police conducted approximately 10 interviews each day. Most news stations preferred a one-on-one interview.



Figure 14: UTPD Chief Robert Dahlstrom speaks to the media at a press conference in the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center (photo by Erin Cargile, *KXAN*)

On September 29, the University, APD, and Capitol Metro began receiving Freedom of Information Act requests for 911 tapes, dash-cam footage from police vehicles, surveillance video from the library, and video from the Capitol Metro bus Tooley rode to campus. UTPD, in coordination with the PIO, created a package of information that included a fact sheet, car video and traffic, 911 recordings, building surveillance video and radio traffic. The package was ready and distributed on October 13, 2010 (two weeks after the event) to credentialed media representatives. UTPD held a press conference on October 14, 2010 at the AT&T Conference Center with a summation of the event.

Part 2.6.1 PIO – What Worked Well

- ***Preparation and training*** - Training and pre-planned, pre-set locations for press conferences were essential to the successful management of media. The PIO was empowered to speak to media and provide updates by EOC and incident command.
- ***Multi-agency participation in press briefings*** - The joint press conferences (university president, UTPD, APD and the Austin mayor) were well coordinated due to relationships that already existed with the UTPD, APD, and city PIOs.

The visual of these briefings conveyed the partnerships and collaboration among university administration, city leadership, and local law enforcement during the event.

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- **Consistent messaging** – Multiple representatives from the university did interviews regarding this event but all provided the same information and safety messages
- **Media relations** - Media relations were professional, factual, and respectful.

Part 2.6.1 PIO – Observations and Recommendations

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER	
Observations	Recommendations
Campus wide email had some issues going out (back up to PIO was out sick)	Train additional personnel as back up for group email communications and set up a secondary system for emergency campus wide emails. Have IT investigate a mobile friendly version of group email.
On the second and third day, the Chief of Police was inundated with one-on-one interview requests.	Proactively manage media requests for 72 hours. Plan for media briefings.
There were data bandwidth issues which were quickly adjusted by the University IT group. People sheltering were streaming local news.	Continue to ensure that personnel have training and authority to address emergency situations.
There was a battery issue with the PIO's cell phone which affected the communication between the PIO and the incident command post.	Ensure alternate communication devices are available.

Part 3: Report Development

Part 3.1: Methodology

Input from various individuals, agencies, and entities who had a role in the initial response and emergency operations during this event was crucial in the preparation of this after-action report. This report is authored by and primarily intended for use by UTPD.

- UTPD requested and reviewed reports provided by external agencies, especially APD.
- There were multiple agencies and levels of government involved in this incident and they may have conducted their own internal reviews and reports.
- An email questionnaire was sent to internal departments and external agencies. The questionnaire had specific and open-ended questions that solicited information on the

response, lessons learned and recommendations.

- UTPD conducted interviews and collected written reports from individuals in the department who participated in the response.

Part 3.2: Key Contributors

- Dr. Gerald R. Harkins, Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Security, The University of Texas at Austin
- Robert Dahlstrom, Chief of Police, The University of Texas at Austin
- Terry McMahan, Assistant Chief of Police, The University of Texas at Austin
- Don Verett, Captain, The University of Texas at Austin
- Julie Gillespie, Captain, The University of Texas at Austin
- James Gabriel, Lieutenant, The University of Texas at Austin
- Gonzalo Gonzalez, Lieutenant, The University of Texas at Austin
- Darrell Birdett, Lieutenant, The University of Texas at Austin
- Charles Bonnet, Sergeant, The University of Texas at Austin
- David Cronk, Director of Emergency Preparedness, The University of Texas at Austin
- Rhonda Weldon, Public Information Officer, The University of Texas at Austin
- David Franklin, Captain, Texas Department of Public Safety
- LaToya Hill, Assistant Dean of Students, The University of Texas at Austin
- Drew Racine, Head of Facilities Planning and Operations, General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin
- Susanna Olivarez, Manager, The University of Texas at Austin

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Part 4: Conclusion

The notification system, response, investigation, and emergency management of this incident was managed extremely well and viewed by most as very successful, but the police department and its leaders have not overlooked the fact that this individual could have hurt and most likely killed many individuals if he had chosen to do so. The facts are that Colton J. Tooley scared a campus community and then took his life. We lost a student and a family lost their son. This was a tragedy, and we cannot emphasize enough the importance of resources that the university and community have made available to anyone who is depressed or who is concerned about the behavior of a student, staff or faculty member. The Behavior Concerns Advice line (512-232-5050) is available to serve the university community 24 hours a day.



Figure 15: Students gather for vigil September 29 (photo by Larry Kolvoord, *Austin American-Statesman*)

The overarching reason for the successful management of this event was made clear in every area's review—effective collaboration among multiple law enforcement agencies made possible by regularly training together. Training facilitates these working relationships. This report also identified many lessons learned, and we have started to address the challenges and implement some of the recommendations as they relate to personnel, training, procedures, equipment, and technology.



Figure 16: Thank you notes to law enforcement line the campus West Mall (photo by Larry Kolvoord, *Austin American-Statesman*)

The University of Texas Police Department would like to thank the responding law enforcement agencies for their assistance during this tragic event, and we want to express special gratitude to The University of Texas at Austin students, staff, and faculty, who showed their support for us that day and in the weeks that followed.

Front cover photos by Jay Janner, *Austin American-Statesman*.