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Laurier to host violence threat and risk assessment training program

Post-secondary institutions and police services to participate

WATERLOO – Violent incidents such as those at Virginia Tech and Dawson College are often preceded by telltale signs that could lead to early intervention. But recognizing these signs cannot be accomplished in isolation or by one university department – it requires a multi-disciplinary approach and means training people from throughout an institution to connect the dots.

On Feb. 10 and 11, Laurier will host a Violence Threat and Risk Assessment Training program for more than 100 representatives from Laurier, Conestoga College, University of Waterloo, University of Guelph, Sheridan College, Fanshawe College and community partners such as the Waterloo Regional Police, Guelph Police and the Ontario Police College. Jim Butler, Laurier's vice-president: finance and administration, will welcome participants on behalf of the university.

“Without formal training, the likelihood of over-reacting or under-reacting to high-risk and threat-making behaviour is increased,” said Rod Curran, director of Laurier's special constable service. “A trained threat assessment team will give the Laurier community an edge when dealing with serious concerns and make our campuses safer for all.”

The 30 people from Laurier's Waterloo and Brantford campuses who will participate in the training represent senior-level employees from a cross-section of departments and faculties. They will form the university's Safe Campus Committee.

The training program is based on the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (CCTATR) “Canadian Model of Threat/Risk Assessment,” and addresses evaluating risk and intervening in all forms of violence and threat-making behaviours.

Attendees will learn to analyse information to determine how high risk a person may be to carry out a violent act towards themselves or others, and to choose an appropriate intervention based on this information.

Laurier was selected as one of eight sites in the province to host the training program, developed and delivered by CCTATR. The Ontario Association of College and Universities Security Administrators (Curran is president of this organization) is bringing the program to Ontario post-secondary institutions through a grant from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The training program takes place 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Feb. 10 and 11 at The Waterloo Inn and Conference Centre.