

# Security: Everybody's job

**One Ontario college has already had a murder at a college pub. How do you prepare for the unthinkable?**

**D**riving home from his retirement party after almost 30 years with Toronto police, Gary Pitcher and his wife, Cathy, mused about their good fortune.

In the previous year, Gary worked hard as lead investigator on the Cecelia Zhang and Holly Jones cases – two high profile child abductions in Toronto.

"In those two homicide investigations I worked 56 days straight and 18 hour days," he said.

But he had turned in his badge for two part-time roles at Durham College where Cathy served as Secretary to the Board of Governors.

Gary's new retirement job seemed too good to be true: six hours of classroom teaching,



*Gary Pitcher, Director of Student Rights and responsibilities at Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, outside the student centre on campus that was the scene of a fatal shooting in 2004.*

coupled with 20 hours a week as the Director of Student Rights and responsibilities. "My boss's problem was she didn't know if there would be that much work for someone in that role," Gary said in an interview with LUMIÈRE.

"But when I got home (that night) there was a message," he said.

A student had been shot in an altercation at a Student Pub on the Durham Campus. He later died.

Immediately, Gary plunged back into 60 hour work weeks as he became key player in the crisis management team, assisting police in their investigation and providing support for students and staff.

That campus killing may have also been the wake-up call to all Ontario Colleges. In this past year we've seen incidents at Dawson College, Virginia Tech and a one-room school in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania. Very bad things can happen anywhere.

What's more, safety is every administrator's responsibility – under federal and provincial laws, backed by fines for individuals of up to

\$100,000 in lower courts, jail sentences, \$500,000 for corporations, and unlimited fines in higher courts. Colleges have a 'duty of care' with respect to employees, clients, visitors, and members of the community who have access to their property.

This duty of care is set out in a number of ways, including: a common-law 'standard of care' consistent with community expectations; 'duty of care' under the Occupiers' Liability Act; duties of employers and supervisors to 'take every precaution reasonable' to protect employees under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the legal duty under Section 217.1 of the Criminal Code of Canada, to protect workers and persons affected by the work:

*"Everyone who undertakes or has the authority, to direct how another person does work or performs a task is under a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to that person, or any other person, arising from that work or task."*

In case you missed the point, if you are an administrator, safety and security due diligence is your job.

"Faculty and staff want to feel safe on our campuses," Rod Curran of OACUSA told LUMIÈRE. "But with limited budgets and poor funding for training that's not going to happen. What they have to look at is risk management liability if something happens."

Curran, president of the Ontario Association of College and University Security Administrators, (OACUSA) and Director of Security at Wilfrid Laurier University, says: "Every security director-manager's nightmare: an active shooter on campus. Because we are a wide-open facility, there is no way you can protect against that."

Gary Pitcher says the openness itself makes campuses vulnerable. "We are a target-rich environment," he said. "One, the school has lots of technology. We have break and enters of laptops and presenters. Crimes are easier to commit here than in the rest of the world since there is a lot more accessibility."

Curran, who retired after 31 years with the Guelph Police Service specifically to implement the community policing model at Laurier, sees

the answer in one word: training.

“Universities and college communities want more out of their security areas. They want prevention programs, they want you to be able to make a safe campus, to make recommendations in regards to safety. You have to have the knowledge and background to do that. The days of hiring an untrained security person are gone. You need trained security professionals who can provide security and lay out a plan to keep your campus safe.”

The training comes in two areas: how security staff react when bad things happen, and how security staff work to prevent such situations.

Ted Carroll, President of Policing & Security Management Services Inc., points out one of the major problems: “There is a gap between community expectations and what security can actually provide or deliver,” he said in an interview with LUMIÈRE. “If someone calls for a security officer because they are being accosted in a remote parking lot, there is an expectation that that security officer is going to be able to do something before the police arrive. Often just showing up in a marked security car and a uniform and using verbal de-escalation skills is all it takes. But sometimes that doesn’t work.”

Curran sees campuses as the ideal setting for the application of community policing. While a regular police force is mainly reactive, campus security can be proactive in community liaison.

“We need the community to help solve their problems so you have buy-in,” he said. “All we are is facilitators. We will talk about the problem, and then try to get some solutions that everyone is agreeable to. Then you have buy-in in the (campus) community.”

The buy-in has to be at all levels, says Ted Carroll. “The person who runs the coffee shop hears and sees a lot of things. A person is sitting in the coffee shop for the past hour by himself and looks really suspicious. The person behind the counter has to know whom to

call,” he says. “This may be nothing at all, but then somebody can have a look at it to see if the person needs to be monitored, and take the appropriate action.”

For John Hammill, Director of Security at Cambrian College, the job begins with involvement in the student code of conduct.

“Mainly we have our code of conduct established, and under the code there are certain authorities granted to our department, mainly in dealing with the violations. So we do enforce those sections of the code of conduct. That ties in with the student services and working with a Dean, or the VP of Academics. We maintain those open and active relationships with those bodies as well as the student administrative council and work to resolve various issues that arise that have been labelled code of conduct violations.”

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At Durham and UOIT, Gary Pitcher works with a similar model. “My job is primarily the enforcement of the student code of conduct in both institutions, which sort of monitors or attempts to have impact on student behaviour. So certainly both institutions have a code of conduct, which is a start for an educational institution.”

For Gary, the involvement in student conduct is essential to campus security – the breaking down of silos. “The kid who is having trouble in pub is also having trouble in school; the kid who is having trouble in rez, may be having trouble in rez, and pub and school. I get all the reports and become the central repository in all that ... it is important for campus security that (such issues) be integrated in one central area.”

“What we also really need is more of a centralized database ... The registrar’s office could be aware of some things, rez could be aware of some things, security

could be aware of some things. It would be nice to have some central database to keep track of some of these problem issues.” He hesitates. “Without a breach of confidentiality.”

That may sound like a tall order. But the same was once said of security cameras, which now provide coverage of 80 per cent or more of some campuses.

It all comes down to funding; for training, for planning, for staffing. Regardless of the model applied, the key issues are having policies and procedures, training, and equipment that is consistent with community needs: staff who can administer CPR, use a defibrillator, have de-escalation training, or higher-level training required as a special constable or intervention-capable security officer.

Changes are promised this year with the enactment of regulations for Bill

159: The Private Security and Investigative Services Act. Under Bill 159, training for security officers will be mandatory and regulated by the Ontario Government.

“For the first time in Ontario the in-house security

people who are employed directly by the employer, as well as contract security personnel, will have to be licensed by the government,” says Ted Carroll. He predicts the regulations will allow for tiers of training in a made-in-Ontario version of the Canadian General Standards Board training requirements.

“Today all it takes is a bump on the dance floor,” said Carroll, a public safety and security specialist with over 35 years experience in both public policing and private security.

This is precisely what happened at Durham with the pub night murder.

“Our student who was killed, frankly, thought he was getting into a fist fight,” said Gary Pitcher. “That’s our culture out here. Two people have a disagreement, (they) fight. He ran into a gang element from Scarborough, (30 kilometres away) and what he thought was going to be a fist fight turned into a gun fight.” ■