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Safety precautions: locked and loaded

Brockport criticized for ignoring SUNY safety recommendations

By STAFF

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The College at Brockport has recently come under fire for the equipment, or lack thereof, provided to University Police officers. While the additions to equipment may be expensive, the potential to save lives is priceless. According to the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) of New York State's website, pbanys.org, "Brockport's Administration has failed to implement the recommendations of a SUNY Chancellor's Task Force assembled to address situations such as those involving an on campus shooter."

After the Virginia Tech shootings, "SUNY Chancellor John Ryan commissioned a statewide task force to advance recommendations designed to prevent and prepare for critical on campus incidents." Essentially, this task force was created to ensure the safety of students in the SUNY system and hopefully never repeat what happened at Virginia Tech in 2007.

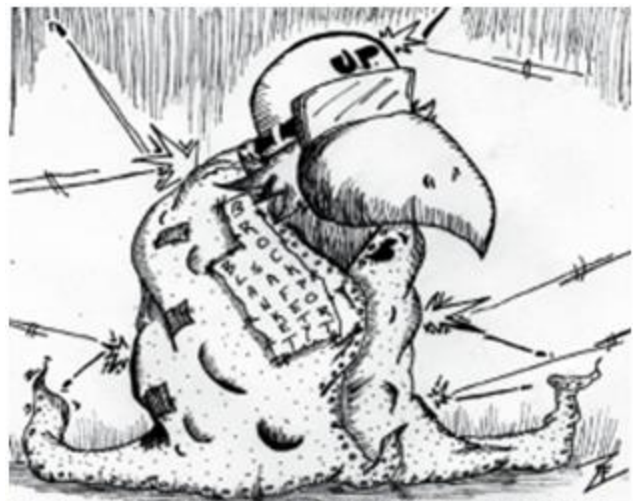
The PBA website also states the task force weapons on campus would include three sets of tactical response equipment — knee pads, elbow pads, helmets with a face shield, riot batons, jumpsuits, gloves, AR15's and a shot gun — that would cost around \$155,100. They also recommended two ballistic shields per campus, which would cost \$106,400.

However, despite the recommendations from the SUNY task force made after the Virginia Tech shootings, the college has neglected to implement these extra safety precautions.

Would we rather pay \$155,100 for special weapons or be unprepared if a horrific situation were to arise? Safety should always be the top priority and should never be taken lightly.

We hope we never have a hostage situation or school shooting, but it's better to hope for the best and be prepared for the worst. To have our University Police equipped, trained and prepared would make a lot of people sleep more soundly.

According to college officials, in the event of an emergency, the plan is to wait for the Monroe County SWAT team to get here to take control of the situation. Maybe it only takes them a few minutes, but during a shooting or



Robert Ferries/STAFF CARTOONIST

After the Virginia Tech shooting of 2007, SUNY made recommendations that schools take extra precautions with their protective measures. Brockport decided to turn down these extra safety measures, making it one of the few SUNY schools to do so.

emergency, a few minutes is precious time. It would never be quick enough. At least not as quick as our own University Police would be, who are located directly on campus.

Minutes could mean lives being saved.

It's better to be safe than sorry. Let's face it, hindsight is 20/20 and no one wants something to happen and look back knowing things could have been different. No one wants to admit that Brockport could have been prepared and did nothing to protect its students, faculty and staff. That's the last thing anyone wants. The ability to prepare for a situation would only benefit everyone in the long run.

If something were to happen, then University Police would have to sit idly and essentially twiddle its thumbs, while officers wait for someone else to come and handle everything on the campus they took an oath to protect. They're trained officials and deserve the chance to prove themselves, should the situation arise.

For those concerned with the presence of powerful weapons on campus, the officers will, of course, have extensive training with the new equipment.

It is a well-known fact that police officers are trained to respect a weapon.

For those who are scared of seeing the guns on campus during their walk to class, the weapons wouldn't be out 24/7. The weapons would only come out when time needed. If the situation were to arise we would be prepared, and that's what matters in the long run.

In light of recent events, it seems incredibly unwise not to be prepared for an emergency. No one expected a murder on campus, but it happened. No one can anticipate a murder or a shooting to happen, but unfortunately, bad things happen all the time. The way to prepare and deal with it is to take extra precaution in preparing the campus and proper authorities.

College students are not the most stable individuals, so why shouldn't the police who have to deal with them have the means to do so properly if needed? No one can anticipate something like that happening. The campus would be a whole lot safer if the police had the correct means to protect us.

University Police officers already have weapons, but they are not necessarily suited to all situations. Whether new equipment is supplied or not, the danger to students in the event of a break-in, neither increases nor decreases. It's not like the University Police does not already have guns in its possession to protect us. They already have guns, so the addition of these won't decrease student safety should there be a break-in.

Between the economy and push for gun control, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on weapons may seem out of place. However, safety and preparation are never out of place. No one wants to lose a friend or a fellow Brockport student, faculty or staff member. Everyone will be more thankful that people are safe than angry that they never took the extra precautions for everyone's safety.

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