Arming University Police Departments
Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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CNA would like to thank our subject matter group, comprising representatives from campus law enforcement and higher education. Subject matter experts included: Mr. Michael Alsup, Chair of the International Association of Chiefs of Police – University/College Police Section and Chief of Police at Harper College; Mr. Timothy Delaney, Chief of Police at the University of Pittsburgh; Mr. Marlon Lynch, Associate Vice President and Chief of Police at the University of Chicago; and Mr. Mark Porter, Chief of Police at Brown University. Their expertise, extensive knowledge, and experience on this topic were invaluable to the development of this report.
Executive summary

Recent tragic incidents have impacted campus and university security. For example, the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, the 2008 Northern Illinois University shooting, and—more recently—the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting have changed the way public safety officials patrol and secure their schools and universities.

In response to such incidents, universities have increased their attention on preventing and preparing for active shooter incidents. Some universities have invested in various protective measures to protect their students, such as installing cameras and bulletproof whiteboards [1][2], while others have incorporated active shooter exercises and drills into their annual training [3]. In addition, several universities have armed their officers to mitigate the risk, increase their ability to respond appropriately, and, ultimately, ensure the safety of their students and staff. CNA recently conducted a study revealing that of the 66 universities that noted in the 2004–2005 Bureau of Justice Statistics Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies that they did not employ sworn armed officers, 28 (42 percent) have since decided to arm their officers, indicating a substantial shift in the last nine years [4].

Arriving at the decision to arm campus and university police forces is complex and involves a continual and active effort by the university and its police department to create and cement strong working relationships with staff, faculty, students, neighboring law enforcement agencies, and community members. The process of arming sworn officers can create concern, and agencies must ensure that the university’s risk assessment and the concerns of each stakeholder are taken into consideration prior to making a decision.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the process that universities should follow as they consider arming their police officers and to provide university officials with best practices and recommendations for each of the steps involved.
Best practices and recommendations: Arming university police

Figure 1 presents each step in the process of arming university police officers, followed by a list of major best practices and recommendations for each step. Appendix A provides a comprehensive list of the best practices and associated recommendations.

Figure 1. The process of arming university police officers

Assess
- Conduct a threat assessment that considers the full spectrum of threats and vulnerabilities.

Decide
- Consider alternatives to arming officers.
- Review all of the risks involved in both arming and not arming campus police officers.

Plan and prepare
- Meet with university staff, students, and the neighboring community about upcoming changes.
- Meet with neighboring law enforcement agencies about the decision to arm campus police officers.

Train
- Include topics such as use of force, firearms, sensitivity, and de-escalation in the training curricula.

Implement
- Consider distributing level 3 retention holsters with each firearm.
Evaluate

- Conduct and evaluate training on use of force and other related curricula, including firearms qualifications. Conduct this training on an annual basis.

- Conduct and evaluate joint training exercises with neighboring law enforcement agencies on an annual basis to assess the performance of all tasks and to identify areas that require additional training.
Mass shootings at schools, colleges, and universities, such as the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, have transformed how educational institutions deal with safety and security. More recent shootings, such as those at Virginia Tech (2007), Northern Illinois University (2008), and Sandy Hook Elementary School (2012), have “focused renewed attention on how colleges and universities deal with campus safety and security”[5].

According to the 2010 report, *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Higher Education*, the number of directed assaults affecting institutes for higher education has increased in the past 20 years, from 40 incidents between 1980 and 1989 to 83 incidents between 2000 and 2008 [6]. Although this increase is notable, the report states that these figures are likely correlated to the increased enrollment levels at these institutions, as well as to media coverage and digital reporting. Nonetheless, the number of incidents has increased the level of emphasis given to campus safety at colleges and universities.

This increasing coverage is also due to the increased frequency of other mass shooting incidents in the recent past. The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators’ *Blueprint for Safer Campuses* notes that there were 14 mass shooting incidents at colleges or universities from 1998 to 2013 [7]. Such incidents as these, as well as other shootings in surrounding neighborhoods, encourage university officials to reassess their security measures. According to a study recently released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of active shooter incidents has increased since 2000 [8]. This study also found that the most drastic increases occurred after 2008 and that schools were the second-most common location of these shootings.

In response to incidents like these, universities have taken an increasing interest in preventing and preparing for active shooter incidents. Some universities have invested in various protective measures, such as cameras and bulletproof whiteboards, to protect
their students [1][2], while many have incorporated active shooter exercises and drills into their annual training [3]. In addition, several universities have armed their officers as a means to mitigate the risk, increase their ability to respond appropriately, and ensure the safety of their students and staff. For example, in May and June 2013, respectively, the University of Oregon [9] and the University of Rhode Island [10] decided to arm their officers, citing the ability to respond quickly to incidents such as active shootings.1 In a study recently conducted by CNA, we found significant increases in the number of universities that have armed their sworn officers soon after each of the mass shootings at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University, and Sandy Hook Elementary School [4].

These tragic events have also had an impact on the push for increased campus safety in state legislation. In 2006, the Pennsylvania State System for Higher Education mandated that all schools within its public higher education system maintain an armed security force [11]. Similar recommendations made to the State of Iowa Board of Regents have led to the authorization of armed officers at the University of Northern Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Iowa [12]. Another example is the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s recommendation to arm all sworn police officers on campuses in the state [5].

Ultimately, arriving at the decision to arm campus and university police forces is a complex process and involves a continual and active effort by the university and its police department to create and cement strong working relationships with staff, faculty, students, neighboring law enforcement agencies, and community members. The process of arming sworn officers can generate conflict, and universities must ensure that they consider the concerns of all stakeholders.

1. In incidents involving armed suspects, like active shooter situations, university police agencies, if unarmed, are not authorized to engage the active shooter and must wait for local law enforcement to respond. Universities who have armed their officers often hail the ability to engage and respond quickly to incidents, rather than having to wait for local law enforcement.
Of note, the decision process is different for public versus private universities. If not restricted by state law and/or the local law enforcement agency, the decision to arm university officers at public universities is most often made by the president of the university and/or a state board of education. In contrast, at private universities, assuming there are no legal or law enforcement restrictions, the president of the university and/or a board of trustees often can make the decision.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the process that universities should follow as they consider arming and/or moving forward on arming their officers, and it includes best practices and recommendations.

**Methodology**

Primary sources of data collected for this report include the following:

- National best practices and standards on the use of force:
  - International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)
  - Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA)
  - International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
  - Major Cities Chiefs Association
  - Police Executive Research Forum
  - National Institute of Justice
- Interviews with subject matter experts
- Media reports
- Open-source research on related topics (e.g., university use of force policies)

In addition to gathering national standards on use of force, we conducted a group conference call with our subject matter experts. These experts assisted in the development of recommendations and best practices on arming campus police officers.
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Arming university police

In this section, we discuss best practices and recommendations associated with each step in the process of arming university police officers. They were developed with the assistance of campus law enforcement and higher education subject matter experts.

Figure 2 illustrates the process that university officials should take as they consider arming their officers and implementing such a policy.²

Figure 2. The process of arming university police officers

Assess

Prior to developing and implementing new protective measures, it is important for campus law enforcement agencies to understand their current risk and threat environment. An assessment of the university’s risks and threats allows officials to begin to identify gaps in its ability to respond to and recover from various incidents that can compromise campus safety.

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2. Universities and colleges such as Brown University, Harper College, Stonehill College, the University of Oregon, and the University of Rhode Island have used similar processes in implementing armed police officers. The Major Cities Chiefs Association also recommends similar processes for university police agencies looking to improve their ongoing relationships with local law enforcement agencies.
Conduct a threat assessment

Conduct a threat assessment that considers the full spectrum of threats and vulnerabilities.

Third-party organizations that specialize in risk management at universities and college campuses often conduct such assessments. A benefit to using a third-party organization is the objectivity in their results. Some universities regularly conduct threat and vulnerability assessments as part of their institutional risk management strategy. These assessments typically factor in the “full spectrum of threats (i.e., natural, criminal, terrorist, accidental, etc.) for the campus” [7]. Other factors include the size of the university, its crime rates, geographic location (i.e., urban, rural), the number of officers, etc. This allows the organization conducting the assessment to tailor findings to the university’s specific situation.

The results of these assessments often guide the university’s application of protective measures and emergency planning assumptions [7]. University officials and administrators who are considering arming their officers must examine the additional risks involved with employing armed or unarmed officers, along with those identified in the assessment [5].

Decide

Making a decision to arm officers must involve the active participation of university officials, public safety executives, and representatives from neighboring law enforcement agencies. Arming officers may not always be the most appropriate protective measure, and decision-makers should consider viable alternatives in their discussions. Considerations such as past precedents, jurisdictional authority, campus dynamics, and the threat and vulnerability assessment results, should be part of the discussion and decision-making process.

Decide to arm or not arm officers

Conduct internal discussions with appropriate personnel prior to pursuing the topic with the university at large.

In some cases, the first step in deciding whether to arm or not to arm officers is to conduct internal meetings with university officials,
administrators, public safety executives, union officials, and representatives from neighboring law enforcement agencies. These initial discussions are essential to ensuring that everyone has the same information and agrees to further pursue the topic of arming officers. These discussions are not venues in which to make the decision, but rather to allow executives and officials to gather information and review any legal limitations and restrictions. Holding this discussion prior to moving forward with the decision-making process eliminates any unnecessary conflict within the community if the university is not legally able to pursue the topic further.

It is important to note that not all universities need to hold these initial discussions. In some cases, state boards of education have already provided universities with the authority to arm their officers; however, there are some instances, especially for private universities, where institutions must first obtain approval from the state, university president, and/or neighboring law enforcement authority.

**Form a committee to review all topics related to arming university officers.**

Once executives have established that there are no legal limitations to arming their officers, universities should form a committee. This committee should include:

- The university Chief of Police;
- Representatives from the university’s safety and security office, student union, human resources, legal counsel, police union, and neighboring local law enforcement agency; and
- Members from the university faculty and staff.

**Consider alternatives to arming officers.**

The committee should examine all alternatives to arming officers. One alternative is locking guns in armories. Officers would be armed, but they would lock their firearms in their patrol cars or at their public safety headquarters. Another alternative is only assigning firearms to supervisory officers/executive command. The committee should consider such alternatives in the context of the threat assessment. Employing such alternatives must meet the public safety needs of the university and outweigh the risks and liability involved.
Review all of the risks involved in arming and not arming campus police officers.

The committee should also review the risks of arming and not arming campus police officers. A risk assessment should be conducted in the context of the threat and vulnerability assessment.

Potential risks for arming campus police officers include:[5]

- Unjustified or improper use of force by the officer;
- Accidental discharge;
- Loss of the weapon to a perpetrator;
- Escalation of weaponry by perpetrators to match or exceed that of campus police officers; and
- Collateral damage to bystanders in any of these situations.

Potential risks for not arming campus police officers include:[5]

- Danger to the officer;
- Danger to students and faculty; and
- Lack of general deterrence, which may embolden armed perpetrators to prey on students and others protected by unarmed campus police.

The University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA)\(^3\) notes that although there is “little reliable empirical evidence regarding either general or specific deterrence as a result of arming campus police,” there are “several scenarios where an institution may benefit from [having] armed officers and where the failure to have armed officers may result in risk and potential liability.” According to URMIA, these scenarios include an active shooter, an armed outsider, and an armed student [5].

An example of an active shooter scenario is the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting. Scenarios like this often require a quick response from

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3. URMIA is an organization that promotes the advancement and application of effective risk management principles and practices in institutions of higher education.
campus police officers. Unarmed officers are often forced to wait for local law enforcement to respond to such situations. Although some universities do not have an issue with the response times of local law enforcement (i.e., the local police department has satellite offices on campus or nearby), some universities, particularly those in rural areas, may experience longer response times.

Armed outsiders are of particular concern for universities located in urban environments, particularly those that are bordered by neighborhoods with high crime rates involving firearms. These types of crimes can often spill over onto university property. Routine patrol operations in this environment, such as a traffic stop on a campus street, can be particularly dangerous for unarmed campus police officers and university students.

**Factor into the decision-making processes such considerations as past precedents; training and standards; campus dynamics; and jurisdictional authority.**

In addition to factoring the risks, threat assessment, and alternatives into the decision-making process, these considerations will help the committee determine the most appropriate decision for the university.

Examining past precedents includes reviewing the legal aspects of the decision. The committee should review how neighboring universities—as well as universities across the nation of similar size and type—are addressing this issue [13]. The extent of training that officers will need if armed is also a consideration that requires further examination. If officers are armed, the level of training needed will vary according to the type of officers currently employed and their level of jurisdictional authority. Arming nonsworn officers or contract security officers is often more difficult because of state or local regulations and laws [13]. On the other hand, universities that currently employ sworn officers that are certified through the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board will have an easier time training and arming their officers, as these officers have typically already met state, national, or other weapons training standards and have the same credentials as local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies [13].
Campus dynamics also play a role in deciding whether to arm officers. The committee should consider:

- The location where the university is situated (i.e., urban or rural);
- The crime rates within and around the university;
- The geography of the university (e.g., gated or open campus, widespread);
- The number of residence halls (i.e., on- or off-campus student housing);
- The number of large events hosted by the university (and other opportunities for large crowds); and
- Current student policies and regulations (e.g., alcohol, weapons).

Jurisdictional authority should also be factored into the decision-making process. Clearly defining the jurisdictional authority of the armed officers will ensure that both the campus officers and the police officers from the neighboring law enforcement agency understand where their authority begins and ends. It is also important to consider whether the campus police department has a formal mutual aid agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place with the neighboring law enforcement agency. If these agencies do not have such an agreement in place, the university will need to develop one prior to arming the campus officers. This formal documentation will ensure that both agencies understand their roles and responsibilities. Additional discussion on developing MOUs can be found on page 18.

**Develop and deliver the proposed decision and all supporting research to university officials.**

Once the above research has been completed, the committee should develop a report that outlines available research on this topic, possible alternatives to arming, the risks of arming and not arming in relation to the threat assessment results, the costs associated with arming officers, and additional factors (e.g., campus dynamics, past precedents) that should be considered in making the decision. The report should also include a recommendation on whether the
university should arm or not arm, based on the information gathered.

If recommending that the university arm its officers, this report should also include the process of arming officers, projected costs, and a plan to inform the university community of the changes. The committee should then submit this report to the president of the university, board of trustees, and/or state board of education for final approval.

Plan and prepare

If an institution decides to arm its campus officers, public safety officials and university executives should immediately begin to prepare the university and its community, as well as the officers within the university police department.

Prepare the university and its community

Meet with the university staff, students, and the neighboring community about the upcoming changes.

Regularly meeting with the campus community as the decision is being made, as well as during the firearms implementation stages, is extremely important. This ongoing communication ensures that the students, staff, faculty, parents, and neighboring community are aware of how the decision is being made, what factors are being taken into consideration, and how officers will be armed. Being transparent about the process ensures buy-in from the campus community.

Participants in these meetings should include the student union, leaders of the faculty board, and members of the neighboring community or neighborhood advisory councils. University officials may also consider tailoring meetings for specific groups of participants. University officials, along with campus police executives, should also be present during these meetings.

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4. Projected costs should include the estimated costs of equipment (i.e., weapons and holsters), salary increases, insurance, and training.
Communicating with the campus community can occur in many different forms; universities should consider holding focus groups, town hall meetings, webinars, panels, or conferences throughout the process. These meetings should occur at regular intervals or as often as the university deems valuable. Universities should pay particular attention to media coverage on the changes and be prepared to respond quickly to any misinformation and provide clarification. This will eliminate false information from spreading and creating unnecessary concern.

Universities should also consider using social media, the university website, bulletins, and discussion boards as a means to inform their community. These alternate methods ensure that students who may be unable to attend meetings are aware of the process and upcoming changes. These communication methods are also able to reach larger audiences, while simultaneously reaffirming to the community that the university places importance on being transparent.

The process of introducing the campus community to such a change should also be consistent with how the university introduces other programmatic changes. This will ensure that the community is not surprised with unfamiliar communication methods.

**Meet with neighboring law enforcement agencies about the decision to arm.**

Although the university should have included representatives from neighboring law enforcement agencies in the initial discussions about arming university officers, ongoing discussions after the decision to arm are also important. Such discussions should continue to refine the roles and responsibilities of each police agency as the university officers become armed. These discussions should include developing and/or updating MOUs, critical incident or emergency plans, and standard operating procedures, and should clearly define the jurisdictional authority of the newly armed university police force.

In developing an MOU, the university and local law enforcement should examine the specific needs of each agency. This “individualized agreement...will assist officers when dealing with unique situations on campus” [14]. The MOU should also define the
roles and responsibilities of each agency and jurisdictional authority\textsuperscript{5} [14]. Some agencies may also agree to expand the jurisdictional authority once officers are armed. This decision should be evaluated on a campus-by-campus basis and should include considerations like off-campus student housing [14].

Once completed, local law enforcement should share this MOU with “all members of the district station [that] surrounds[\textit{sic}] the campus” [14]. Training and testing on this new MOU should be conducted through annual joint training exercises and drills. Both agencies should conduct an annual review of the MOU to ensure that it is being followed as written [14].

**Prepare the university police department**

Meet with university police supervisors and officers about the upcoming changes.

In addition to meeting with the campus community about the upcoming changes, university officials should meet with members of the campus police department. These meetings can occur as part of an in-service training or during a daily roll call. These meetings should include representatives of the university, legal counsel, human resources, campus police union, and campus police executives.

The purpose of these meetings should be to inform officers and supervisors of the decision to arm, as well as the process of issuing firearms. University and campus police executives should review all aspects of the change. Meeting participants should also discuss additional training, development, and/or updates to related policies and procedures, as well as the expected timeline of the process. These meetings should allow officers the ability to ask questions and discuss the impact of the changes on their daily operations.

These formal meetings should be held immediately after a decision has been made to arm officers. University officials and campus police executives must also be aware of the spread of misinformation and be

\textsuperscript{5} Jurisdictional authority can be confusing, especially for campuses in urban areas.
prepared to resolve and clarify any concerns within the department and among the officers.

**Develop and/or update related policies and procedures.**

University officials and the campus police department must work together to develop and/or update related policies and procedures. Policies that cover topics such as firearms, use of force, weapons management, and administrative review should be reexamined and/or drafted. In most cases, a university will already have a use of force policy in place; however, this policy should be updated to include procedures, legal limitations, and departmental regulations on the use of deadly force.

IACLEA, CALEA, and IACP also provide standards and guidance on related policies, such as use of force and firearms, legal limitations, authority, training, and weapons management [15][16][17][18]. Although the university staff might not be seeking accreditation from these organizations, they should consider following such standards; this will ensure that their policies and procedures meet the highest standards of practice available.

The university should also review use of force policies and other related policies from schools with similar demographics. In addition, university officials should review the standards to which local law enforcement officers are held, and consider meeting or exceeding these standards. This will help to ensure that the university is better prepared to deal with questions of legal liability. We also recommend that the university consult with the local law enforcement authority as the use of force policy is drafted and/or updated.

Once policies are drafted, the campus police department should have university officials and members of the committee on arming officers review and approve the new policies. Suggested changes and recommendations by the committee and university executives should be discussed prior to final approval. In some cases, the university may face particular concern from the neighboring community; therefore, the university might also consider reviewing the revised and/or new policies with local community leaders. This will allow the community leaders to bring forth their concerns prior to the final approval and implementation of the new policies and procedures.
Train

While training on any aspect of police operations is important, training on the use of deadly force is critical, particularly in a college campus setting. Universities should train officers on the new policies and procedures surrounding the use of firearms and deadly force. Universities should also conduct psychological testing of officers. This testing and training will be crucial to the successful implementation of the new policies and procedures.

**Conduct training on new policies and procedures**

*Include topics such as use of force, firearms, sensitivity, and de-escalation in the training curricula.*

University officials should review the training standards of neighboring local law enforcement in comparison to the training provided to their campus police officers, and they should strive to meet or exceed such training standards. Doing so will help to alleviate community concerns and provide reassurance that campus police officers are being held to the same standards and levels of accountability as local and/or state law enforcement officers.

The curricula and number of training hours vary from university to university, depending on the university’s needs and the requirements and the training standards issued by the state. Courses that the university police agency should consider adding to its training program once officers are armed include use of deadly force, weapons management, de-escalation tactics, cultural sensitivity, and jurisdictional authority.

An integral part of this training program will be on the institution’s new or updated use of force policy. Training on the changes to the policy, on how and when to use deadly force, and on how to report the use of deadly force should be primary components.

Officers should also be provided with supporting training materials, such as guidebooks and/or pocketbooks. These reference materials will assist officers in quickly identifying areas where the policies and procedures have changed. These supporting materials can be kept on their person or in their patrol vehicle. These materials are not meant
to be comprehensive, but rather supplemental summaries of the changes to the new policies and procedures.

**Conduct psychological testing for all officers who are issued firearms.**

This testing examines whether an officer is mentally and emotionally capable of using deadly force in a responsible and sound manner. This test will also examine an officer’s decision-making skills and thought processes. Psychological testing will allow university officials and campus police executives to determine whether their officers are prepared mentally and emotionally to carry—and potentially use—a firearm.

**Develop a plan for how to handle officers who are unable to complete firearms training and/or qualifications.**

The university should be prepared to deal with the possibility that some officers will be unable to complete the firearms training and/or qualifications. University police agencies may find a number of their officers who have not completed similar training in several years, making it difficult for these officers to recall their previous training and qualify with their firearms. These universities should consider reassigning these officers to alternative positions where firearms are not needed. In some cases, the university should prepare to dismiss these officers if no other alternative positions are available.

**Implement**

Firearms should not be issued until after training—on both the use of the firearm and the related policies—has been completed and after the officers have submitted and completed all other qualifications. This section discusses the process of distributing the firearms and other necessary equipment.

**Issue firearms**

**Issue firearms to officers once training and qualifications are completed.**

Some universities with large police departments might choose to stagger the distribution of firearms as a means to immediately begin
arming their officers. Other universities might choose to wait until all of their officers have completed the training to issue firearms.

Issuing firearms in an agency with over 100 officers will take time; officers must first complete all training, which could be delivered in a staggered manner, especially if it is conducted within the school year. The process of arming officers can take 18 months on average, from initial discussions to issuing firearms. Some universities may not see a reason to extend this timeline. The decision on how to distribute firearms will be unique to the department’s needs.

**Consider distributing level 3 retention holsters with each firearm.**

Level 3 retention holsters have a “three-part locking device to maintain handgun retention” [19], which makes it difficult for a suspect or perpetrator to remove the firearm from the officer’s holster in a physical altercation. Distributing this type of holster to the officers will help to alleviate concerns from the community and ensure continued buy-in.

**Evaluate**

Evaluating training and exercises provides an avenue for university police agencies to test and improve plans, policies, and procedures. Universities should conduct training and exercises on an annual basis to ensure that officers remain proficient on the use of force and of firearms. Training, exercises, and drills should be evaluated to ensure that policies and procedures are being followed as written. Evaluations of annual training sessions should also measure knowledge gained.

**Conduct and evaluate ongoing training and exercises**

Conduct and evaluate training on use of force and other related curricula (including firearms qualifications) on an annual basis.

Use of force training should be provided annually [15]. Firearms qualifications should also be conducted at least annually, or in accordance with local or state standards. According to IACLEA, “officers should qualify at least once each calendar year with any firearms they are authorized to use” [15]. CALEA standards also affirm this, stating that “at least annually, all agency personnel authorized to carry weapons are required to receive in-service
training on the agency’s use of force policies and demonstrate proficiency with all approved lethal weapons” [16].

The curricula covered in this training and the frequency of the training will vary from university to university. Universities should consider meeting or exceeding the training requirements of local or state law enforcement agencies. This will help to alleviate concerns among the university community and demonstrate the university’s resolve to hold officers to the same standards and levels of accountability as their neighboring local or state police agency.

This training should also be evaluated through pre- and post-tests as a means to measure knowledge gained. These evaluation measures will allow trainers and the university campus police to address deficiencies in the training delivery and materials and/or departmental policies and procedures.

**Conduct and evaluate joint training exercises with neighboring law enforcement agencies on an annual basis to assess the performance of all tasks and to identify areas that require additional training.**

Joint training should serve as a tool to develop skills and build/reaffirm relationships [14]. The goal of annual joint training exercises should be to test and improve plans for mutual aid in all areas of emergency planning and critical incident response [7].

Training should include scenarios that pose the highest levels of risk to the university. Examples of these training scenarios include an active shooter, an armed student, and an armed outsider. Such joint training opportunities play “a significant part in preparing for the possibility of an emergency on campus…[and offer] the opportunity [for these agencies] to build personal relationships, as well as strengthen skills together” [14]. Evaluation of this training should be used to inform improvements to the MOUs and other planning documents (i.e., standard operating procedures).

**Evaluate policies and procedures**

**Evaluate policies and procedures on an annual basis.**

University police departments should evaluate their policies and procedures on an annual basis; this is especially important for university police agencies that have recently armed their officers [14].
Universities should use the training exercises to identify gaps and inform any needed changes to these policies and procedures. These policies should also be reexamined after every critical incident to ensure that they are clear and consistent with operational procedures.
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Conclusion

Recent mass shooting incidents have amplified the need to address campus safety and security. In the past nine years, 42 percent of universities that did not previously arm their officers have now become armed, and many of these increases occurred after significant mass shootings [4].

While arming officers may not be the most appropriate option for many universities, some are actively considering this protective measure as a means to ensure the safety of their staff, students, and officers. Arriving at the decision to arm university officers is multifaceted and must factor the unique characteristics of the university, such as its risks, demographics, location, and crime rates, as well as the concerns and safety of the students, staff, and community members.

If the decision has been made to arm officers, implementing the change is also challenging. The process should include conducting a threat assessment, formulating a committee to review all topics related to arming university officers, assessing the risks involved with both arming and not arming, making the decision, and then properly preparing the university and the university police department for the changes to come. In addition, universities should account for changes to the type of training and equipment necessary and the need to evaluate this training to ensure that officers understand and are following the new policies and procedures as written. University officials and campus police chiefs must also successfully communicate the changes and their implications, while remaining transparent throughout the process.
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Appendix A: List of recommendations

Table 1 lists the recommendations identified in each step of the arming process.

Table 1. List of recommendations

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<td>Develop and deliver the proposed decision and all supporting research to university officials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plan and Prepare</strong></td>
<td>Prepare the university and its community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet with the university staff, students, and neighboring community about the upcoming changes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet with neighboring law enforcement agencies about the decision to arm.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Train</strong></td>
<td>Prepare the university police department.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet with university police supervisors and officers about the upcoming changes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop and/or update related policies and procedures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implement</strong></td>
<td>Conduct training on new policies and procedures.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Include topics such as use of force, firearms, sensitivity, and de-escalation in the training curricula.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct psychological testing for all officers who are issued firearms.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a plan for how to handle officers who are unable to complete firearms training and/or qualifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issue firearms to officers once training and qualifications are completed.</td>
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<td>Consider distributing level 3 retention holsters with each firearm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Conduct and evaluate training on use of force and other related curricula (including firearms qualifications) on an annual basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct and evaluate joint training exercises with neighboring law enforcement agencies on an annual basis to assess the performance of all tasks and to identify areas that require additional training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluate policies and procedures on an annual basis.</td>
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References


