

Dorothy Siegel, *Campuses Respond to Violent Tragedy*. Phoenix, AZ, The Oryx Press, 1994.

College administrators hope that they will negotiate their careers without ever having to respond to a tragedy that affects the campus on which they work. As our society grows increasingly violent, our campuses follow suit and the likelihood of any campus remaining untouched by tragedy and human suffering grows smaller each year.

Dorothy Siegel has been at the forefront of work about campus violence since 1986 when the Campus Violence Prevention Center was established under her leadership at Towson State University in Maryland. Now Ms. Siegel has provided another important service for college administrators by collecting information from recent campus tragedies and calling from those instances many commonalities and much good advice for the benefit of readers.

*Campuses Respond to Violent Tragedy* is a very readable book that is organized in a usable manner. In Part I, Ms. Siegel selected eight different campus scenarios that demonstrated a variety of serious campus incidents: multiple off-campus tragedies; date rape; stranger rape; suicide; serial murders off campus; a high-profile athlete as assailant; and multiple murders in the classroom. Through interviews with principle decision-makers, the author describes each incident from the multiple perspectives of people who were the decision-makers or affected in some way by the incident. This method of telling each campus story is very effective for two reasons. First of all, the reader receives a rich and detailed account of events because the picture that is presented is taken from many angles. Secondly, the reader can use their own campus experience to relate to the police chief's version of the incident, in comparison to the resident director, the information officer, the president and other campus authorities. While each campus has its own character (and characters!), and each tragedy, its own set of circumstances, one can see many aspects of these stories that make the experiences of our colleagues applicable to our own situations.

As an example, the perspective of the Information Officer in each story was remarkably similar: conscientious about relations with the press; concerned about institutional image; mindful of the need for accuracy balanced with a desire to assist reporters who must meet press deadlines. Regardless of the circumstances of the situation, each person had a role to play that was, in part, dictated by title. For instance, in most of the examples in the book, the president of the institution was perceived as an effective part of an institutional response if they were visible at the scene of the emergency.

Ms. Siegel provides chapter summaries that give the reader an overview of the successes and shortcomings of each institution's response to emergencies. These chapter summaries, combined with the advice in the closing section of the book will give campus administrators an agenda to use to prepare their own campus for tragedies that can strike unpredictably. Additionally, the chapters that describe two institutions experience with Hurricane Andrew are very useful for disaster planning. The magnitude and pervasiveness of this experience is overwhelming to read, but the lessons learned can help other institutions prepare for disasters.

*Campuses Respond to Violent Tragedy* is a resource that can help campus administrators prepare and plan for events that defy planning. This book removes some of the fear and anxiety from the prospect of campus crises situations and replaces that anxiety with sound advice and preparation guidelines that can make campus responses more effective.