Securing Classrooms

Overview: A number of agencies have investigated best practices for securing schools against active shooter situations. Their reports consistently note that interior doors, especially classroom doors should be able to be locked down quickly. Furthermore, the doors should be designed with view panels or sidelights to increase the visibility of adjacent spaces and corridors.[1] Nation security standards can be very specific, for example:

> **6.13.** All classroom doors shall be lockable and door locks shall be tamper resistant.
> **6.14.** Door hardware shall allow staff to quickly lock rooms from the inside without stepping into the hallway.[2]

Options: There are three options that are generally available to provide this type of security:

1. Interior door locks that are manually operated and presumed to be under control of the teacher or other occupants within a classroom. Note that these mechanisms still must allow for emergency egress, i.e., the door must open and unlock in one motion.
2. Electronic locking systems, like the PSU badge access system, wherein the doors could be programmed to be locked to those outside the room whenever they are closed, or could programmed to be unlocked during normal hours of use but could be activated to lock by a central entity like CPSO in the event of an emergency.
3. Physical barricade devices made for this purpose, stored in each classroom. Types vary depending on direction of door swing, type of lock, etc…

Interview Findings: Discussions with PSU's locksmith indicate that none of the classrooms on campus currently lock manually from the inside.[3] The options for addressing existing classroom locks must be evaluated in light of the following:

- Classrooms are not under control of one individual throughout the day, as they would typically be in a K-12 setting.
- Manual door locks (e.g., push buttons) or barricade devices enable individuals to enter rooms and lock themselves in at any time for any purpose; the urban and open nature of PSU's campus exacerbates this potential problem.
- Door locks could be left locked at all times to avoid unauthorized access; however this would require a complicated key management system entailing new/different keys for instructors every term.
- Effective physical barricade devices vary by type of doors, i.e., there is no one-size-fits-all option, and all options would have to be approved by the local fire marshal.

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[1] Homeland Security: Primer to Design Safe School Projects in Case of Terrorist Attacks and Schools Shootings, January 2012. p. 4-27; https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/st/bips07_428_schools.pdf
[2] Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, Reepoort of the School Safety Infrastructure Council, November 19, 2015. p. 33; http://das.ct.gov/images/1090/SSIC%20Report%20Nov%2019%202015.pdf
[3] Michael Doiel, Locksmith, PSU, personal conversation, December 2016.

- Electronic locking systems average $5,000 - $10,000 per installation (i.e., per door) for buildings with existing networking infrastructure; costs are higher for buildings without existing infrastructure.[4]
- Central control by CPSO of electronic locking systems may not provide the sense of security and individual control that campus community members may be seeking.

Peer Analysis: Oregon's other large universities have approached this issue in a piecemeal way. At the University of Oregon, there is no campuswide standard. The campus is implementing a process for departments with security concerns to consult with campus police to assess their space. If campus police approve enhanced security, departments pay for their own upgrades. This can result in discrepancies between departments depending on their resources. In discussing this with an U. of O. representative we learned that their faculty who take active shooter training seem less inclined to view locks as a comprehensive solution.[5]

Likewise, Oregon State University does not have a campuswide standard for door locks. New construction typically includes classroom doors that lock manually and external doors with electronic access. No program currently exists to systematically retrofit older buildings, although departments can finance their own lock changes and upgrades.[6]

Understandably, Umpqua Community College (UCC) has taken the most comprehensive approach to upgrading multiple security systems, including door locks. In UCC's 2016 legislative budget request, approximately $155,000 was allocated for 46 electronic card readers and upgrades to existing card readers. An additional $465,600 was earmarked for fiber system upgrades necessary to network the electronic door systems and other security systems.[7] UCC has about 20 buildings on 100 acres, compared to about 50 buildings on 50 acres at PSU.

Recommendations:

- The most versatile and comprehensive solution is an electronic locking system. While costs would be significant, a more detailed study of this approach would help campus leadership evaluate the cost/benefits of this solution.
- Manual door locks and barricade devices present a range of implementation difficulties that make them impractical for PSU.
- Increased emergency preparedness and response training for the campus community may reduce the perception that locks are the most appropriate solution at PSU.

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[4] Quinn Soifer, Technical Services Manager, Capital Projects and Construction, PSU, personal conversation, February 2017.

[5] Krista Dillon, Director of Operations, Safety and Risk Services, UO, personal conversation, January 2017.

[6] Mike Bamberger, Emergency Manager, OSU, personal conversation, January 2017.

[7] Umpqua Community College Oregon Legislative Request, February 2016.