

The time is now for college civility

Recognizing the lack of civility:

Every generation that comes into the world of higher education brings a new set of challenges and the dynamics associated with that era. In 2010, Tyler Junior College conducted its annual student survey of their overall experience and ways to improve. One of the questions dealt with how safe they felt at school. The candid answers served as a wakeup call as well as a call to action.

The simple truth was the college was getting a negative reputation very quickly and something had to be done to stem the tide. The campus culture as one of the “Friendliest Colleges” was turning out to be one where students, faculty, staff, and the community tried to avoid.

Tyler Junior College was established in 1926 and is a public community college in the city of Tyler, which is located in Northeastern Texas and has approximately 100,000 residents.

Quick Facts...

- Est. 1926
- 12,000 credit students
 - Nearly 1,100 Residential Life & Housing Students
- 268 full-time faculty
- 60+ student clubs/organizations
- Nationally Ranked Academic Teams
- Nationally Ranked Athletic Teams
- Alumni Chapters
 - Dallas, Houston, Austin, Los Angeles and New York City

The college is known for its Three Promises including; (1) A Quality Education, (2) A Vibrant Student Life, and (3) Community Service. The unfortunate truth was many in the community, particularly students, felt as though the college was not living up to its fullest potential.

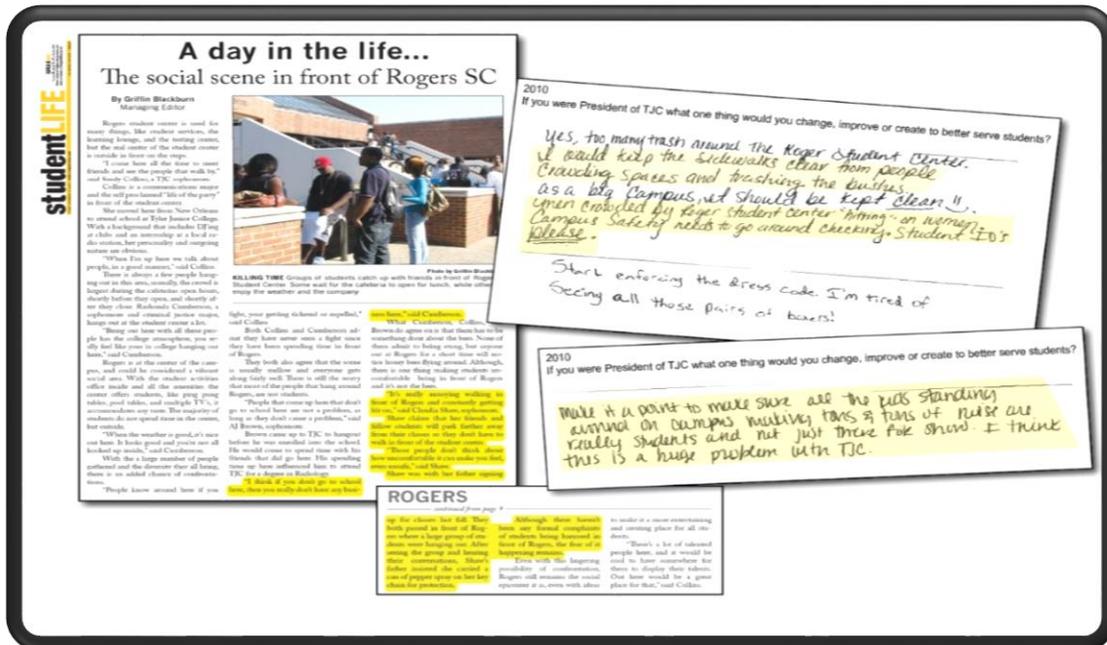


This negative perception was reflected in the comments of the annual student survey. College president, Dr. Mike Metke paid close attention to the concerns of the students and determined it was a time for a cultural shift.

Dr. Metke sought out comments from faculty and staff to see if the student concerns were mirroring the findings in the annual student survey. What he discovered is that while the college had beautiful façade, with stately buildings and beautiful landscaping which rivals many private colleges, it had serious internal concerns and was heading downhill fast.

The concerns consisted of a very real fear of crime on the campus and a lack of civility. There was a growing sentiment the colleges best years were behind it and large numbers of people would avoid buildings or attend the numerous extra-curricular activities at the college.

The easy answers for why the college was facing incivility were numerous, such as; it is an open enrollment community college; it is surrounded by a growing and increasing urban city; students today were not taught civility at home, therefore, nothing could be done to stem the tide due to legal constraints and student rights, etc., etc., etc...



To the credit of the college president and the elected Board of Trustees, these were mere excuses and a positive change in the culture could happen and needed to happen. A change in the civility would attract and maintain a college that played a central role in both transfer and vocational training to the surrounding region. The conceptual buy-in by those leading the charge's bold steps allowed the college to embark on a journey that has paid dividends and changed the culture of the college to once again being seen as a leader in higher education and "East Texas Friendly."

Taking the first steps:

President Metke reached out to many on campus and one of the individuals was Dr. Thomas Johnson. Before joining Tyler Junior College he had retired after 20 years of service from the Houston Police Department. Many of the crime prevention and fear reduction that HPD had adopted in Houston such as community policing, neighborhood watch and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) peaked the president's interest.

Crime prevention initiatives focused on reducing fear and the opportunity for crimes to be committed. Therefore, a primary tenant was to look at the physical environment as well as strategies to reduce the fear associated in a given area.

The president made a decision to change the environment and culture of the college, but realized for it to have long last effects there needed to be "buy in" by all parties. He wanted the college to once again be "East Texas Friendly" and inviting to those who sought a higher education as well as deter those who were coming on campus for nefarious reasons.



The president quickly established of the Civility Taskforce, which was chaired by the Vice President of Student Affairs. The taskforce was comprised of student leaders, faculty, staff, and administrators. The group was given great latitude in experimenting with concepts that could stem the negative tide and bring about a cultural change at the college.

Civility Task Force



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Utilizing the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design model, the college examined the places where problems tended to manifest. This was simplified since the earlier student survey and frank discussions with employees laid bare specific weakness such as;

- lighting at night between classes or along pathways to parking lots;
- cutting all hedges, plants, etc. to no more than 4 foot to increase visibility;



- end people setting on landscape ledges and cat-calling females, using vulgar and derogatory language and clogging the stairways to the cafeteria and other areas in and around the student center;



- stop not knowing who was on campus at any given time;
- halt being accosted, pushed, and regularly witnessing fights and assaults.
- bring an end to walking through cigarette smoke to get to class, etc.

- listen to the requests that campus police become more visible in and around campus, particularly in the late evening.

As with most undertakings, the taskforce had to determine what the end product would look like in order to know if the initiative has been successful. The advantage of a collegial institution was there were a cornucopia of ideas and strategies that were brought to the table.



The college wanted students, employees, and the community to enjoy their experience on campus. They wanted a safe environment but not have the feeling that the college was under martial law.

A logical time soon presented itself to do many of the physical changes with the approaching summer break. During the summer of 2010 several changes were implemented and initiatives started such as;

- new and brighter lights installed throughout the campus;
- decorative metal fencing was placed along the ledges of the student center, which prohibited sitting on them impossible;
- additional surveillance cameras were added to areas where problems arose frequently;
- big screen monitors of the 300+ surveillance cameras were placed in the campus police dispatch area;

- old and vandalized wooden picnic tables and benches on the concrete walkways were replaced with new 4 person metal tables and heavy iron benches;



- all benches and tables were placed on concrete pads so that they did not back up people on the walkways, keeping them clear;

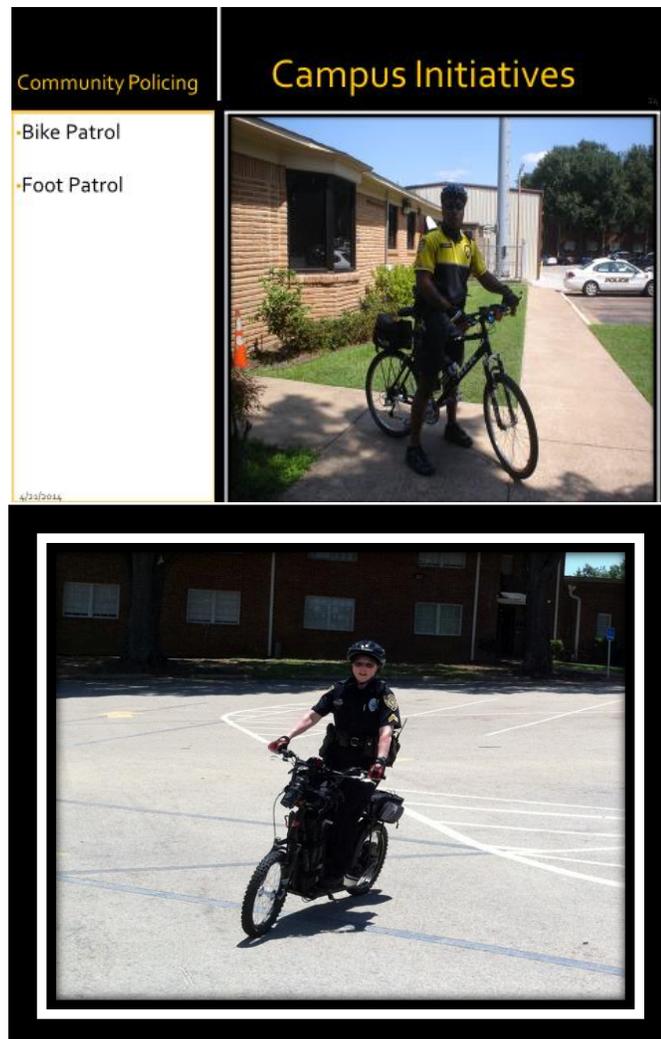


- all of the outside sitting and study areas where the tables and benches were well lit and had surveillance cameras;

- safety metal signs indicating that people should not block entrances, exits, areas under surveillance, and not sitting on stairways, etc.;



- The campus safety office was re-named to Campus Police. The department went from having a few officers and several security guards, to a larger department made up of only certified Texas police officers. With the additional officers, the college had a police presence 24/7/365 and did not have to consistently rely on assistance on the local city police force;



- The manner in which the police officer patrolled radically changed. The adoption of community policing where the officers were placed on foot or bike patrol and walking the halls to maintain high visibility. Officers were encouraged to attend the college via a free tuition for employees and dependents as well as develop relationships with the students and employees;

- New equipment such as new patrol cars with Campus Police boldly printed in reflective material. Small wearable video cameras while on duty and optional colored polo shirts (school colors of gold and black) instead of wearing the everyday traditional navy uniforms to look less militaristic; and
- a Mutual Aid agreement was signed between the Tyler Police Department and the TJC Police Department. The agreement allows the college access the local high trained police department and encourages them to come to the campus, get to know the buildings and halls, and have their SWAT team come and familiarize themselves in case the need arises.



- the local media was brought in and a front page story on the new civility initiative was published in the local newspaper. This was done to announce the community that the institution was making a culture shift in the expectations and security of the college.



TJC Campus Gets A Makeover



Staff Photo By Emily Guevara

NEWLY INSTALLED: Tyler Junior College Director of Public Safety Dr. Thomas A. Johnson stands next to newly installed fencing near the Rogers Student Center on the TJC campus.

Officials Hope To Help Make Campus Safer

By EMILY GUEVARA Staff Writer
Standing near the entrance to the Rogers Student Center on the Tyler Junior College campus, Dr. Thomas A. Johnson points out the changes. Branches have been removed, wrought-iron fencing has been installed and bushes that once were 8 feet tall now are eye level. And empty mounds of dirt await the new plants that will be put there. To the naked eye, there are minor adjustments... more aesthetic changes on a campus that likely has seen hundreds since its inception. But to Johnson, each adjustment has a purpose. His goal is to create a campus climate that shows safety, sensibility and beauty.
'We're going to make it more beautiful than it was before,' said Johnson, TJC's director of public safety. 'We're going to make the school safer, and it will give people a safer perception of the school.'
It is not so much that TJC has had major crime problems. In fact, most of the major incidents that have occurred involve nonstudents who happen to be hanging out on the campus, college President Dr. Mike Metke said. But campus crime aside, the feeling by many students is that it is unsafe.
Case in point: student evaluations from spring revealed that safety was a major concern for some students.
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'You need way more protection (in) front of the lunch room,' wrote one student. 'There is way too much lighting. People don't feel safe.'
Another comment read, 'I would like more lighting outside. When I get out of class, it's late and it's very dark outside. I don't feel safe walking to my car.'
And finally, 'campus safety needs to go around checking students IDs please.'
It was these comments and additional concerns from parents that got Johnson thinking about solutions.
As a retired police officer with 20 years of experience at the Houston Police Department, he had seen how poor planning or the gradual deterioration of a neighborhood can affect behavior.
Conversely, he saw how proper planning and proper environmental design could positively influence it.
So he created a plan. And with the help of other college administrators, Breedlove Nursery and

Landscape and the college maintenance department, he is making it happen.
The idea is not to take away everything that students or faculty had before, just to put some order to it.
'You can't control people gathering,' Johnson said, 'but you can control where they gather.'
For example, although the benches were removed, new tables with attached chairs will be placed around the campus to provide seating in places out of the way of human traffic.
This will provide places for students to study while keeping them off the walking path, Johnson said.
Wrought-iron-style fences already have been placed on several concrete walls that surround the student center. These fences are designed to prevent students from sitting on the walls so climbing is less likely and people can walk through the area more easily.
Johnson said that, previously, the area was almost impassible between the hours of 11

a.m. to 1 p.m.
He said trimming the bushes around building entrances and the campus in general means that students, faculty and any other visitors will be more easily seen by other people and security cameras.
But the changes are not just about landscaping or environmental design.
President Metke has charged a task force with recommending several changes to help improve the campus climate and students' behavior.
Officials already announced that the campus will be smoke-free come fall. In addition, students and faculty will be required to wear IDs at all times with students having gold lanyards with black lettering and faculty and staff having black lanyards with gold lettering.
Students who live on campus will have stickers denoting that all students will have stickers showing that they are in fact registered for the current semester, officials said.
'We can hire a SWAT team or

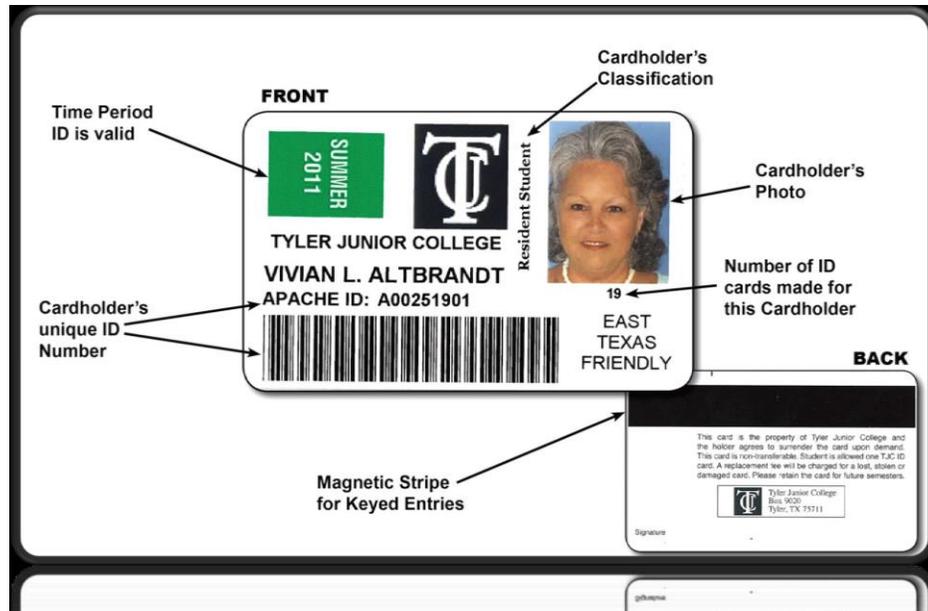
whatever,' Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Johnny Moore said during a recent board workshop. 'But really, (the) safety of this campus involves the eyes and ears of everybody.'
Other efforts include the idea of forming learning communities in the dorms, updating the student dress code, and updating the course guidelines and classroom expectations.
Metke said college officials want students to be successful and that means setting clear and high expectations.
'We're going to emphasize how future leaders and successful people act and look,' Metke said. 'We're trying to put students in the position to be successful when they leave here.'
For his part, Johnson will continue to focus on the landscape and campus surroundings — something he said will now have more of an order to it.
'It's using what we already have; it's just making it so it's a safer environment,' he said.

As with any public community college, one of the largest problems is knowing exactly who is on campus. This was most evident when a year earlier the local city police department requested to send some officers undercover and buy drugs on campus due to the amount of arrests associated with our students when they left campus and went into town.

Within a short period of time, the rumors of drugs being sold on campus was validated and in truth were being sold out in the open all over campus and most notably in front of the college student center. When all of the arrests by the Tyler Police Department were made, it was determined that 5 out of the 6 dealers were not students. The arrested individuals were blending in by wearing backpacks and knowing when classes let out and where the best places to ply their trade on campus.

Therefore, the challenge was; how to determine who should be on campus. The answer was quite simple and had in available for decades, the student ID card. The college president took the bold step and went to the Board of

Trustees to approve a measure that became the backbone for the college, to become the safe educational environment he had envisioned. The step was requiring all employees and students to visibly wear the ID card on a lanyard while on campus. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the new policy and it was made abundantly clear that the new rule was to be taken seriously. The key, however, was not in the policy being approved, but enforcement and adherence to the measure.



This change which would produce a cultural transformation needed to be done carefully and with all of those involved understanding why the change was necessary. The steps included:

- Having a specific start date, which was set for August 1, 2010.
- Informing all employees and students the change was coming via signs, emails, meetings, halls, buildings, talking with the local media outlets of the change, etc.
- Having a grace period (aka educational period) during the first week of school which allows new students and faculty to get their ID card or renewed stickers for returning students.
- Purchasing clear ID holders and lanyards to pass out.
- Posting the ID lanyard policy in each classroom and around campus:

Student/Employee Lanyard Policy:

1. Lanyards must be worn around the neck while on campus, and the ID card must be clearly visible at all times, unless it should be removed for safety reasons or an approved ADA variance.
2. Any lanyard is acceptable, but it must be similar in design and worn in the same manner as the official college lanyard. The color of the lanyard is not critical.
3. No one will be allowed into class without wearing his or her ID/lanyard.
4. Students who do not have their ID/Lanyards may pick up a Day Pass at the Campus Safety Office, Campus Safety Substation located at the Rogers Student Center or from a TJC Ambassador. The first Day Pass each semester is free of charge. For all subsequent Day Passes a \$5.00 cost recovery charge will be billed to the student's account.
5. Employees may obtain a Day ID/Lanyard from their respective Dean's or Director's office.



East Texas Friendly!

Effective 02/12

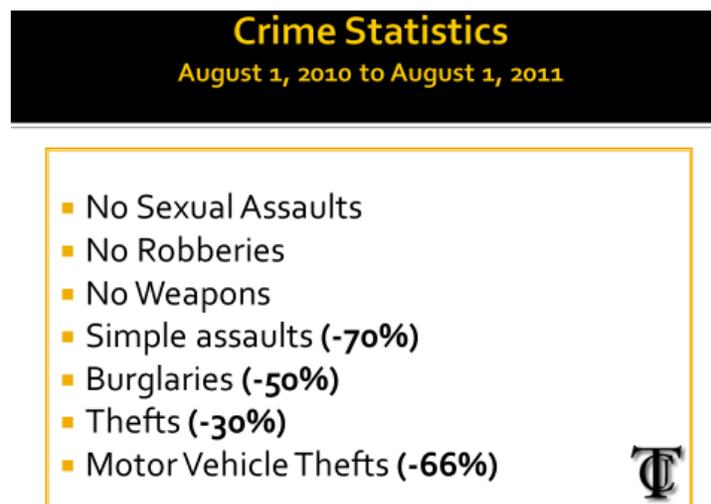
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 - Employees may obtain a Day ID/lanyard from their respective Dean's or Director's office.
- A Day Pass is simply an adhesive paper ID that is good for that day only and encoded to ensure that is not duplicated or used again.
 - TJC Ambassadors are retired individuals from the community who are to train to notice anyone on campus that does not have an ID/lanyard on. If a student forgot their ID the Ambassador can quickly make one for them so they can go to class. Ambassadors carry a police walkie-talkie and wear a gold vest. It is similar to a greeter at many big-box stores. They also serve to assist visitors looking for a particular individual or building. The point is they engage the person

to see who/what/ why they are on campus in a friendly manner. Yet, they assist campus police by acting as an extra set of eyes and ears by walking the grounds and halls of the campus.

- Campus Police Officers are also engaged in looking for ID/lanyards and this gives the police probable cause to engage in conversation with someone not wearing one on why they are on campus. This “probable cause” has prevented a great amount of crime both violent and non-violent as well as discovered numerous individuals on campus who had outstanding warrants for their arrests. The ID/lanyard policy has drastically cut the amount and types of crime on campus to a minuscule level for a large college even with an open campus.
- A police substation was placed at the student center, which is in close proximity of the academic buildings, so students needing a Day Pass or another ID card could be processed, without coming to the main police station.
- As with any initiative, the simple question is “do you mean what you say?” This was clearly the case when a small percentage of the students during the first semester did not wear them to class or refused to wear them on campus. This led to the Dean of students disciplining them for their actions. Without being “firm but fair”, the initiative would have faltered. There were some students who just would not do it and after some intermediary disciplinary steps, they were eventually suspended for consistently violating the college policy. Once a handful of students out of 12,000 were suspended, it sent a strong message and the other students and faculty embraced the change as non-negotiable.
- This also meant that faculty had to be educated and understand that they were the front line of enforcement in many cases. Board Policy Bullet point #3 states: “No one will be allowed into class without wearing his or her ID/lanyard.” This is a vital point by clearly stating “No one” this helps the professor since there is no discretion and the professor does not have to determine which excuses to accept and which ones to deny. The faculty is periodically given feedback of incidents where violent criminals have been arrested on campus because they did not have an ID/lanyard.



Within a year, local school districts saw how crime had dropped at the college and their boards adopted the same policy. Therefore, before long, the students from feeder schools had been required to wear an ID/lanyard so they were used to wearing it each day. It became the cultural norm within a year of implementation.



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Another initiative, which began on August 1, 2010, was enforcing a second College Board policy of no smoking on campus. This initiative was suggested and brought to the Board by the Student Senate and supported by the Faculty Senate. The initiative used many of the same mechanisms

for the lanyard/ID initiative. Signs were placed around campus, the faculty and students were educated on the new policy, and enforcement began. The surprising finding was that it was implemented with little to no opposition or push-back. An interesting side effect of this was that in prior years there were a multitude of students who would sit and smoke on plant ledges. They would break the sprinkler heads off and other sorts of vandalism by burning, as well as leaving thousands of cigarette butts. With the implementation of CTED and no-smoking, there are very few incidents of vandalism and the landscapers are quite pleased.

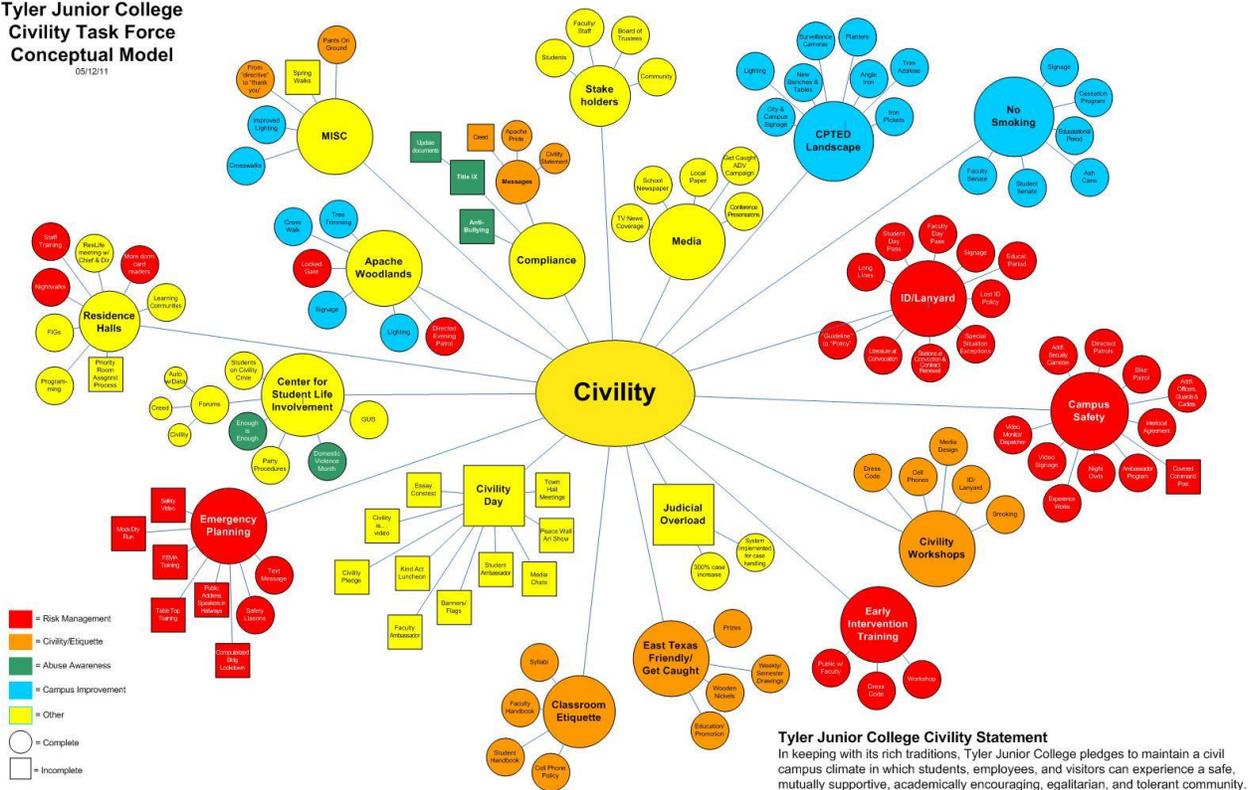


Accomplishments of the Taskforce includes:

<http://www.tjc.edu/info/2004350/civility/747/civility> at tyler junior college

A Civility Task Force representing a cross-section of faculty, staff, administration, and students meets regularly to discuss issues related to safety and civility and plans activities designed to improve civility. Recommendations for action are referred to the Vice President of Student Affairs, the President or the Executive Cabinet for approval.

Tyler Junior College
Civility Task Force
Conceptual Model
05/12/11



Action Items Implemented as a Result of the Civility Task Force

- Implemented Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (landscaping)
- Implemented No Smoking policy (2010)
- Implemented ID Lanyard requirement for all faculty, staff and students (2010)
- Added civility expectations to course syllabi

- Began using garbage cans for “East Texas Friendly” and no-smoking signage campaigns
- Increased Campus Police staff to 19 Police full time Officers, 4 Reserve Police Officers, 5 Student Worker Cadets and 9 Ambassadors
- Added to Security Cameras (approximately 300 on Main campus as of December 2013)
- Implemented Directed Patrols and patrols on foot, bike, Diggler-electric scooters
- Added video signage in available locations
- Added a Campus Police substation at Rogers Student Center
- Extended Campus Police hours for non-traditional students
- Held numerous different civility workshops at convocations and Professional Development days
- Hosted Civility Day
- Implemented the “Get Caught Doing Something Good” incentive program
- Improved lighting throughout campus
- Added crosswalks and flashing crosswalk
- Took steps to improve student dress and behavior
- Created a civility statement and, with the help of Student Senate, a college Creed
- Hosted Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Initiated “Enough is Enough” against violence campaign
- Conducted emergency planning meetings and training sessions including FEMA Training and a Table Top Training for Executive Cabinet
- Implemented new Text Messaging/Warning System
- Updated Building Managers list
- Made public the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) and hosted training
- Added lighting, improved security and implemented directed evening patrols of Apache Woodlands
- Presented Civility presentations at various colleges, state and national conferences, including NISOD
- Hosted Campus Safety Awareness Week
- Added parking lot signs to match numbering system and created new campus maps detailing their locations and audiences
- Put in effect a new inter-local agreement with Tyler Police Department

- Created a Title IX subcommittee, website and complain forms
- Presented at convocation for Title IX training, attended multiple trainings, created a Camp Staff and Chaperone Handbook and Title IX awareness signage
- Dealt with misuse of the TJC name on printed materials by area nightclubs
- Instituted a temporary parking pass system
- Started U-TIP program to allow individuals to anonymously report crimes or suspicious concerns via mobile text

UTIP Spot Suspicious Activity?
Anonymously report crime tips or suspicious activity.

- Text to 79516
- Enter "tjctip"
- Enter a space & your message

Your name, phone number and location will not be reported to Campus Safety - only your message. Message and data rates may apply.

For an **EMERGENCY**, call Campus Safety! 903-510-2222

- Have a tip about suspicious activity on a Tyler Junior College campus or satellite facility but want to remain anonymous? The College has launched a new system that will accept your information without repercussion.
- As a result of its contract with e2Campus, TJC now offers "U-Tip," a communication service that can provide mobile text messages directly to Campus Safety in an anonymous fashion.
- This service will allow students, employees and even visitors to our campuses and satellite facilities to report suspicious activity or provide crime tips without their identity being exposed.
- Individuals who wish to make a report or "tip" may do so by sending a text message to 79516, using the keyword of "tjctip."

- Began a working relationship with the FBI and Joint Terrorist Task Force for training in case of an attack
- Conducted “Active Shooter” scenarios with FBI
- Conducted a safety assessment of Apache Woodlands
- Conducted fire drills on main and west campuses
- Created new crisis management flip charts and placed in each office and classroom

Outreach:

Since the implementation of the TJC Civility efforts, the college has had numerous other institutions of higher education come and observe how the college is making a cultural shift. The relationship between the community and the college has improved with a recent bond election passed to build a new 150,000 square foot nursing building. Donors during this period of time have also increased. One substantial donor (who had given more than 30 years ago) was so impressed how the college took care of the facility named after her relative, once again made a sizable donation to the college.

The crime numbers at the college have plummeted to one of the lines that is said during each of the summer orientation is “TJC crime numbers are so low that one incident in several categories will make crime go up 100%.”

This education of expectation of civility that starts when a new student comes in for orientation. This concept is reinforced in everything the college does and stands for and has made Tyler Junior College once again “East Texas Friendly.”

