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DISTRICT

Students ill-prepared for emergency

By Kathryn Kelman
editor-in-chief

In the weeks following a high-profile school shooting in Florida, many TCC students say they feel safe on their respective campuses but not necessarily prepared to face an emergency situation.

As the school shooting has dominated headlines, many campuses across the country have evaluated their own preparedness.

At TCC, some students say they have never participated in an emergency drill or training while at TCC.

Kai Marion has been a student on NW and TR campuses for two years but has never participated in an emergency drill or training.

“No, I don’t feel prepared,” she said. “I don’t know what to do.”

She said doing drills, especially after the Feb. 14 school shooting in Parkland, Florida, should be important for the college. At the same time, she said she doesn’t feel unsafe.



“I see lots of cops around, but it would be nice to know what to do in an emergency,” she said.

TCC conducts drills on every campus, every semester, according to emergency management director Kirk Driver.

In 2016, the college conducted 16 emergency drills across all five campuses and other properties, according to TCC police’s annual crime report.

“Those drills are conducted by TCC police and are a way to test some of our notification systems,” Driver said.

Campus police determine what drills to do, when and what campus building to evacuate because they can’t conduct a drill across the entire campus at one time, he said.

SE student Inez De La Cruz has also never participated in an emergency drill or training session. She is worried about not knowing TCC’s protocols, she said.

“If something bad were to happen, it would be chaotic if you didn’t know where to go or what to do,” she said.

Ricardo Guijosa, who’s been a student on TR and TR East for three years, has also never participated in an emergency drill or training, he said. For Guijosa, the only reason he feels prepared to face an emergency while on campus is because of the training he received in the Navy, but he would like to see more drills happen at TCC, he said.

“I think most people should know what to do in case of any form of emergency,” he said. “Drills help with that.”

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Alertus Login Information

1. Download the Alertus app
2. Sign up with your TCC email
3. Enter in the organizational code TCCD
4. Enter the PIN code 8911

When searching for the app in the Apple App Store or Google Play the results offer two options. Students, faculty and staff need to download the yellow “recipient” app.

SOUTHEAST

Kinesiology department chair on SE dies at 39

By Jamil Oakford
managing editor

A month after the Feb. 5 death of SE kinesiology department chair Danny Lee Aguirre, officials still have not determined the cause. He was 39.

The cause of death is pending toxicology results, according to the Dallas County Medical Examiner’s office.

Aguirre, a Grand Prairie resident, is survived by his wife, his parents, two brothers and a niece and nephew. A funeral Mass was celebrated Feb. 10.

SE Campus administrators remembered Aguirre as a loyal and dedicated employee and colleague.

Campus president Bill Coppola said the campus feels the loss of his presence strongly.

“Danny was a very important member of the SE family,” he said. “He was the type of individual that any president would want on their campus.”

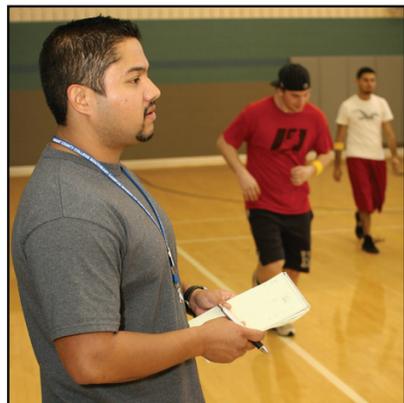
Coppola said he was always willing to go the distance if it meant someone received the help they needed.

“Danny was fun, loving and dedicated to helping others,” he said. “He never hesitated to jump in whenever needed.”

Aguirre began working at TCC 20 years ago as SE’s intramural sports director. After six and a half years, he became the kinesiology department chair.

Tommy Awtry, SE mathematics, engineering, science and HPE divisional dean, said his colleague was someone who looked at his work with purpose.

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Collegian file photo

SE kinesiology department chair Danny Aguirre died Feb. 5 at age 39.

TRINITY RIVER

He, too

TR instructor shares his story as sexual assault victim

By Kathryn Kelman
editor-in-chief



Sheldon Smart has battled poverty, homelessness and immigration and survived.

The Trinidad and Tobago native is the first in his family to attend college and has earned a doctorate. He’s been a full-time TR speech instructor since 2013, a mentor with the Men of Color mentoring program, a life coach and educational technician at a substance abuse rehabilitation clinic, a YouTuber and he’s hoping to publish a novel at the end of this year.

But it was a casual conversation with a friend while watching TV last fall that he realized he needed to speak up about something else — the fact that he was sexually assaulted.

“I was sitting there watching it, and me and my best friend were talking about it and he knew what I’d been through, and I’m watching it and we’re talking about it and I’m realizing, ‘Geez man, I fit into this category, but I’m not saying anything and they are,’” he said.

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TR instructor Sheldon Smart was born in Trinidad and Tobago and immigrated at 22 to continue his education.
Lacey Phillips/The Collegian

SOUTHEAST

Coding class offers more than technology

By Jamil Oakford
managing editor

Students with autism are learning a new language to prepare for the workforce, thanks to SE Campus’ Community & Industry Education office.

CIE is offering a Python coding class for students with autism to help prepare them for jobs. After working for years with students with special needs, CIE vice president Carrie Tunson said the most underserved group she saw was students with autism. While they’re highly proficient in many academic areas, they needed help in other areas.

“They go to college just like any other student, but they lack the interpersonal skills to keep a job,” Tunson said.

She said this class is designed to not only offer the students an edge in the practical skills area of their resumes but to give them guidance in an area where students with autism typically struggle.

“Most of the students who take these classes are highly skilled in mathematics,” CIE director Vickie Moss said. “So when they get into these classes, one of the ways they deal with social skills is by working in teams.”

In these teams, students will help develop code for various products, she said. The class can also effectively help students with autism work on their interpersonal skills by



Robert Burn/The Collegian

SE coding instructor Joe Charles sits with student Jordan Carter as he works. This class is offered through the campus’ Community & Industry Education office.

having a small, manageable class size.

Python, a coding language used for web programming and desktop applications, was chosen over other coding languages because of the need for Python-fluent coders in the workforce, Moss said.

“We were trying to meet the need of the Texas Workforce Commission to include and provide a service to the students that can be used in the workforce immediately after

completing this class,” she said.

Some of the students are finding this coding language to be a breeze.

“This is my first coding class,” SE student Conor Tysinger said. “So far, this has been pretty easy. Nothing too complicated.”

For SE student Ellen Clinton who is in her 50s and already a professional, she finds this class to be exciting.

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Are you preprepared?

How to respond when an active shooter is in your vicinity

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that people are likely to follow the lead of others during an active shooter situation.

First Option ...

Run

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave belongings behind
- Help others, if possible but don't move wounded people
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible, move in a zig-zag pattern
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Call 817-515-8911 when you are safe



Second Option ...

Hide

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide.

Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
- Lock and blockade the door
- Silence your cellphone
- Turn off any source of noise
- Hide behind large items
- Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 817-515-8911 to alert police to the shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen



Last Option ...

Fight

As a last resort, and only if your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

