

AUCCCD Statement on Firearms on Campus

October 23, 2009

The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) is a professional association representing 763 institutions in the United States, Canada, and internationally. As a part of our mission, AUCCCD seeks to promote the awareness of college student mental health through research, education, and training provided to members, professional organizations, and the public with special attention to issues of diversity and multiculturalism.

Within our role of promoting awareness we wish to educate legislators, policy makers, administrators, and potential consumers by stating our grave concern about the impact of implementing legislation and policies that would allow for the presence of firearms on our college and university campuses.

The sanctioning of firearms on campuses would make our campuses less safe. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students, after accidents. Access and availability of firearms is a significant factor in observed increase in the rates of youth suicide. Research on suicide clearly shows that impulsivity is also a significant component in completed suicides. Increasing the availability of a lethal means (firearms) to commit suicide is likely to increase the incidence of suicide in the college student population.

Campus counseling centers have a priority to contribute to campus safety through their programs and services. Counseling center directors have unique experiences, roles, and responsibilities related to campus safety. We also urge policy makers to seek consultation from counseling center directors when forming policy to address such important issues as decisions about access to firearms on campus.

We all want our campuses to be healthy and safe environments where students, faculty, and staff are supported and able to work toward their goals.