



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

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### **Governor Bill Richardson Announces Higher Education Campus Safety Task Force**

#### *Recommendations to Safeguard Students and Campus Communities*

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today announced the creation of a higher education Campus Safety Task Force. The task force was created in response to the tragedy at Virginia Tech on April 16, where thirty-two people died as a result of a student gunman on campus. Immediately following the tragedy at Virginia Tech, Governor Richardson called for a task force to be formed, to assess security needs on New Mexico’s college and university campuses. The task force includes leadership from the state’s public safety and higher education departments.

“On Monday, the worst mass shooting in America’s history took place at Virginia Tech,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “The hearts of every New Mexican, and every American, go out to the victims and their families. This occurrence is an unfortunate reminder that we must be vigilant and protect the valued lives of our students, faculty, and staff who are a part of our campus communities.”

As a result of the tragedy, Governor Richardson instructed New Mexico Higher Education Secretary Beverlee McClure to begin working with the state’s colleges and universities to ensure adequate safety measures are in place. These measures include having safety, disaster response, and crisis communications plans in place and updated regularly. The state will also be looking into the security personnel and the levels of training those personnel have, on each of our campuses. All of which will help to determine how to better prepare campus police and security officials to respond to such incidents.

The Governor announced the Campus Safety Task members:

Task Force Chair Javier Gonzales, Chair of the Board of Regents, New Mexico Highlands University

Pug Burge, Associate Vice President of Administration, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center

Ray Chambers, Chief of Campus Police, Eastern New Mexico University

Ruben Chavez, Chief of Safety and Security, CNM

David Eppich, Vice President for Student Services, San Juan College

Kathy Guimond, Chief of Campus Police, University of New Mexico

Dennis Hunter, Director ERMTC Division at New Mexico Tech

Dr. John Juarez, Retired Student Services Vice President, New Mexico Tech

Louis Latasa, Chief of Campus Police, New Mexico Tech

Steve Lopez, Deputy Chief of Campus Police, New Mexico State University

Tim Manning, Director, Office of Homeland Security

Kevin McCabe, Deputy Chief of Central Investigations, Albuquerque Police Department

Dr. Beverlee McClure, Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education

Chief Faron Segotta, New Mexico State Police

Commander Tige Watson, ABQ Fire Department

Frank Gonzalez, former Gallup Police Chief

The Campus Safety Task Force will meet next week. It will be charged with developing recommendations to be made to the Governor for improving the safety of students, faculty, and staff on campuses in the state. Governor Richardson is committed to creating a safe learning and working environment for all New Mexicans.

“Our colleges and universities take the issue of safety very seriously. New Mexico’s public safety specialists and college and university experts have responded quickly and with sincere interest to our request for participation in the task force,” said Higher Education Secretary Dr. Beverlee J. McClure. “While I feel confident that our campuses are currently quite safe, I am certain that the outcome of the work of the task force will identify any areas in need of improvement and allow us to implement changes in a timely and effective manner.”

Secretary McClure requested that the presidents of New Mexico’s public colleges and universities respond to a survey regarding campus safety issues. The results of that survey will be reviewed by the task force next week.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department was established as a Cabinet-level agency in April 2005. Its purpose is to increase access to the state’s public colleges and universities and to expand educational opportunities for all New Mexicans. For more information, contact the New Mexico Higher Education Department at 505-476-6500, toll free at 800-279-9777, or visit [www.hed.state.nm.us](http://www.hed.state.nm.us).

