

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS  
AUDIT AND MANAGEMENT ADVISORY SERVICES**

**Students of Concern Response Team  
Audit & Management Advisory Services Project #24-10**

**October 2024**

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AMAS Project #24-10**

**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

**Background**

As part of the fiscal year (FY) 2024 audit plan, Audit and Management Advisory Services (AMAS) performed a review of campus violence and threat assessment procedures administered by the Students of Concern Response Team (SCRT).

SCRT is a multidisciplinary team of stakeholders representing various units on campus. It is intended to provide systematic intervention and guidance and manages concerning situations involving students who are distressed or may be at risk of distressing others or the campus environment. The Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs (OSSJA) provides informal resolution of student grievances as well as non-clinical case management services, based on a referral system, to students in distress or causing distress. Additionally, the OSSJA director coordinates SCRT.

**Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate SCRT protocols for identifying and receiving reports of potential threats, threat information dissemination, case assessment, and triage.

To conduct this review, AMAS examined case manager tools; reviewed SCRT procedures; analyzed case referral trends; interviewed key personnel; and evaluated the SCRT's program against standards published by the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA),<sup>1</sup> which were highlighted by the SCRT Chair as best practices for threat assessment professionals. Please refer to the Appendix for further information about NABITA.

**Conclusion**

The SCRT reviews, investigates, and evaluates cases of concerning behavior from or directed to the campus community. Members of the SCRT expressed deep commitment to this work and have maintained a high level of responsiveness despite a notable increase in referrals, which have increased annually by approximately 25% since the 2019-2020 academic year. The SCRT is a crucial group engaging in duties instrumental to supporting students and campus alike. For these reasons, aligning the SCRT with relevant industry standards (NABITA) will help UC Davis develop effective integrated approaches for threat mitigation. This report highlights NABITA's 21 standards and discusses their application to the SCRT.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment. The 21 NABITA industry standards are elaborated upon in the Appendix found at the conclusion of this report.

## **Observations, Recommendations, and Management Corrective Actions**

### **A. Alignment with NABITA Standards**

**In order to align with NABITA standards, the SCRT would benefit from receiving an explicit committee charge, which would include responsibility for assessing and documenting its resource needs, as well as formalizing written procedures, roles, and communication methods.**

Violence is typically not spontaneous; therefore, it may be preventable. Effective violence prevention begins with early intervention and support efforts.<sup>2</sup> Identifying early signs of distress among students and connecting individuals with the appropriate channels of support remains at the core of an integrated approach in addressing perceived threats or the possibility of acts of violence before they occur. The challenge lies when various campus individuals hold bits of information without a centralized mechanism or knowledge of where/if to report this information. Matters may further escalate when there is an insufficient edifice for assessing threats of violence amongst students.

With respect to the student population at UC Davis, the SCRT is the university entity that engages in such behavioral intervention and threat assessment protocols. The SCRT recognizes the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) as the industry leader and source of best practices for establishing and improving Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (BIT) teams. NABITA developed 21 standards against which such BIT teams can be measured. (Refer to the Appendix for a complete description of NABITA, including its mission and vision, and an elaboration of the 21 standards). For these reasons, AMAS relied on the NABITA standards in this review to assess the SCRT and its activities.

In several important respects, the SCRT in its current structure falls short of the NABITA standards. For instance:

- NABITA standard #1 addresses a team's authority and scope to fulfill its institutional charge. The SCRT lacks an actionable mission statement, a delineated scope of responsibility, and an institutional charge elevating its ability to authorize comprehensive assessments and interventions.
- NABITA standard #8 addresses whether the team's established budget is sufficient to meet these standards, the ongoing needs of the team, and the community it serves. The Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs coordinates the SCRT; however, a dedicated budget strictly for SCRT operations is not allocated.
- NABITA standard #5 addresses team membership. The SCRT leadership and membership lack uniquely defined roles and individual responsibilities. SCRT participation is not recognized as an integral aspect of the members' duties.

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<sup>2</sup> National Threat Assessment Center (2023). Mass attacks in public spaces: 2016-2020. Published by U.S. Department of Homeland Security and United States Secret Service.

- NABITA standard #10 addresses a procedural manual. The SCRT does not have formalized internal procedures for all members to abide by and as a resource to refer to.
- NABITA standard #7 addresses information sharing. The SCRT bears a reliance on informal methods when soliciting input from members.

It is important to develop and promote a campus culture of understanding the SCRT as a resource to report conceived threats and concerns. It is of equal importance for the institution to explicitly grant the SCRT with a charge in order for the entity to meet its mission and ensure alignment as well as consistency of practice with the 21 NABITA standards. In its current state, the SCRT lacks a robust organizational structure, a clear cross-campus reporting framework, and defined responsibilities for its members to comply with.

### **Recommendation**

Management should develop a comprehensive plan to evaluate the 21 NABITA standards and assess the applicability of each to the SCRT. NABITA provides resources such as self-assessment tools that can assist management with its alignment efforts.

### **Management Corrective Actions**

- 1) By 06/30/25, Student Affairs management in consultation with leadership from other SCRT-participating units, including Campus Counsel and the UC Davis Police Department, will:
  - a) establish a mission statement, a delineated scope of responsibility, and an institutional charge for the SCRT, elevating its ability to authorize comprehensive assessments and interventions.
  - b) establish a budget sufficient to meet its mission, the ongoing needs of the team, and the community it serves.
  - c) establish SCRT participation as a component of members' job descriptions including membership duties and responsibilities.
  - d) establish an internal procedural manual that supports SCRT operations.
  - e) establish procedures for communications and information sharing.
  - f) evaluate and make suggestions regarding implementation of the remaining 16 NABITA standards not detailed in (a) through (f) above, as applicable.

## Appendix

### **National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA)**

NABITA is an independent not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It has more than 6,000 active members from colleges, universities, schools, and organizations. The Advisory Board consists of over 26 leaders in the field. NABITA's offices are in Pennsylvania.

NABITA hosts an annual conference, many certification trainings per year, maintains a listserv, and provides frequent webinars to members and non-members. NABITA is a clearinghouse for BIT-related model policies, training tools, templates, and other BIT-related materials.

NABITA's mission is to provide education, development, and support to professionals who endeavor every day to make their environments safer through caring prevention and intervention.

NABITA's vision is to make schools and workplaces safer environments where development, education, and caring intervention are fostered and encouraged. NABITA brings together professionals from multiple disciplines who are engaged in the essential function of behavioral intervention in schools, on college campuses, and in workplaces and organizations for mutual support and shared learning.

NABITA provides comprehensive behavioral intervention and threat assessment solutions for higher education institutions to improve safety policies and protocols.

NABITA's 21 Standards (outlined below) are rooted in academic research examining mass shootings and campus violence, clinical studies, law enforcement reports, and governmental investigations. NABITA's professional standards provide a framework for the structure and process of campus behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams.<sup>3</sup>

### **21 NABITA Standards**

1. **Team Authority and Scope:** The team has a mission statement, statement of scope, and the authority to fulfill its institutional charge.
2. **Prevention vs Threat Assessment:** Institutions have one integrated team that addresses early intervention cases as well as threat assessment cases.
3. **Team Name:** The team's name accurately communicates the function of the team within the context of the institutional community.
4. **Team Leadership:** The team chair brings the team together and keeps discussions productive and focused while maintaining a long-term view of development and education.

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<sup>3</sup> National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment. NABITA Industry Standards for Intervention. <https://www.nabita.org/>

5. **Team Membership:** The team is comprised of at least five, but no more than ten, designated school officials.
6. **Team Training:** Team members engage in regular, ongoing BIT training to increase competence, build confidence, and foster team development.
7. **Information Sharing:** Team members share information according to BIT standard operating procedures and comply with FERPA/privacy/confidentiality requirements (as applicable) when accessing and sharing information.
8. **Team Budget:** The team has an established budget sufficient to meet these standards, the ongoing needs of the team, and the community it serves.
9. **Community Education and Marketing:** The team educates its community about bystander engagement, recognizing leakage, and making referrals. The team markets its functions/services through advertising campaigns, websites, logos, and other promotional materials.
10. **Procedural Manual:** The team has a written procedural manual that supports an objective, consistent, and evidence-based functionality.
11. **Referral Receipt and Review:** The team has a process for receiving, reviewing, and triaging all referrals.
12. **Meeting Operations:** The team holds meetings at regular intervals, following an agenda and established process for facilitating team meetings.
13. **Objective Risk Rubric:** The team uses an evidence-based, objective risk rubric to assess every referral.
14. **Psychological, Threat, and Violence Risk Assessments:** The team uses objective, evidence-based tools to conduct violence risk, threat, and psychological assessments as part of its overall approach to prevention and intervention.
15. **Interventions:** A team clearly defines its actions and interventions for each risk level on the BIT's objective risk rubric.
16. **Case Management:** The team invests in case management as a process, often as a role/position, that provides flexible, need-based support for individuals to address referral concerns, connect with resources, and improve overall wellness.
17. **Case Review:** The team regularly uses a written and formalized case review protocol to determine and document the need to keep a case active, to engage in case monitoring, or to move a case to inactive/closed status.

18. **Recordkeeping:** Teams use an electronic data management system to keep records of all referrals and cases.
19. **End of Semester and Year Reports:** The team collects data to analyze trends or patterns, publishes its findings in semester or annual reports, and adjusts resources, marketing, and/or training in accordance with its findings.
20. **Team Audit:** The team regularly assesses its structure and processes to ensure it is functioning effectively and is in alignment with best practices.
21. **Program Effectiveness:** The team deploys various research methods to assess the team's effectiveness in meeting goals and outcomes.