

Using as a primary example three cases—the famous 1969 murder of Tatiana Tarasoff by a Berkeley graduate student, a 1995 shooting spree by a law student at Chapel Hill, and the 2007 rampage shooting by an undergraduate at Virginia Tech—this article examines historic and current applications of the duty to warn and protect college campuses from acts of extreme violence by their mentally disturbed students. As lethal violence by students becomes an increasingly foreseeable peril of academic life, and as new resources are developed for assessing, managing, and treating disturbed students, the law is changing with respect to institutional duty. This article explores the tensions and connections between providing effective treatment for mentally disturbed students who are allowed to remain enrolled and safeguarding campuses from anti-institutional violence. It concludes by proposing a model of institutional duty that supports the creation of safer academic spaces. It argues that the appropriate analytical framework emphasizes the prevention as well as the foreseeability of violent student behavior, acknowledges the administrative relationships of campus organization, and reinforces the institution's capacity to communicate relevant information about disturbed students and to coordinate appropriate responses. At the same time, the analysis respects the educational goals of individuality, inclusiveness, and diversity in the student body; supports better training of faculty and staff in identifying and managing disturbed students; and encourages college and university administrators to manage potentially dangerous students promptly and effectively to reduce the likelihood of violent outcomes.