



## **Multiple Anonymous Threats to U.S. Educational Institutions**

### **Advisory prepared by the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit 2 (BAU-2), Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG):**

#### **Reference**

Various U.S. educational institutions (EI) have received anonymous threatening communications, at least some of which have been highly publicized. Methods of delivery have included electronic communications directed to individuals, departments and the institutions at large. No actual explosives, hoax devices or hazardous materials have been located or recovered at any of the targeted institutions; no plans to engage in targeted violence have been discovered in association with these threats.

#### **Administrative**

This advisory is based upon information available at the time this report was prepared. Should additional information or case materials become available at a later date, certain aspects of this analysis may be subject to modification or change. **Dissemination of this assessment outside of appropriate channels within receiving law enforcement agencies is prohibited absent authorization by the FBI.**

#### **Advisory**

The BAU-2 recommends that all EIs receiving anonymous threats adhere to their established response protocols, including the immediate notification to appropriate law enforcement agencies. Every threat of violence should be taken seriously and responses to such threats should be carefully considered.

In general, published research demonstrates little to no correlation between a threatening communication and a subsequent act of violence in cases involving anonymous threateners. Both research and experience consistently demonstrate that most threatening communications of this type are intended to frighten, harass, annoy, and intimidate rather than to announce actual, imminent targeted violence toward an EI. Motives of those sending such communications often include disruption, personal entertainment and/or achieving notoriety. Although some notifications may be required when a threat is deemed credible, unintended consequences may be associated with additional media announcements; this attention facilitates the sought-after entertainment and notoriety for the offender, and can inspire copycatting.

No hazardous, inert or hoax devices have been recovered at any of the threatened targets, either in 2012 or 2015. Additionally, none of the communications have been linked to an identified plan to engage in targeted violence in association with the EIs.

Campus, school, and safety officials are encouraged to consider the full spectrum of reasonable response strategies to anonymous threats, bearing in mind the potential negative consequences such as disruption, costliness and media attention, associated with large-scale evacuations or closures. Institution administrators, campus safety professionals and law enforcement officials should jointly consider alternatives in light of all facts and circumstances known to them when an anonymous threat is received.