



May 10, 2013

Dr. Kathleen Burke-Kelly, President
Pierce College
6201 Winnetka Avenue
Woodland Hills, CA 91371

Re: Gun training and safety courses on campus

Dear Dr. Burke-Kelly:

We are writing to inform you the Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council believes Los Angeles Community College District policies regarding the firearm training and safety courses taught on Los Angeles Community College Campuses need revision or implementation.

We came to this conclusion because:

1. It has been brought to the attention of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council that Pierce College is offering gun owner certification and gun safety extension (non-credit) courses on campus.
2. Per the State of California’s Attorney General’s published guidelines, this course does not meet the requirements to own a handgun (see attached list of entities recognized by Department of Justice as providing firearms safety training).
3. As per the Gun Free School Zone 1995, the general public is not expecting weapons to be on campus, nor are they permitted, except for law enforcement personnel.
4. Despite policies represented by Pierce College administration, when contacted, Sherriff’s Deputy Al Guerrero, among other deputies, reported they were not aware of the gun courses or firearms on campus and were not checking the safety of the inert weapon used for instructional purposes.
5. It follows that if procedures exist and they are not being followed, then the policies and procedures are inadequate to protect the public.
6. Additionally, we have learned that District Trustees Scott Svonkin, Mona Field and Nancy Pearlman were not aware of the gun courses offered, nor any related policies and procedures to protect the public.

7. There are no requirements for signage warning visitors and staff to the presence of “inactive” weapons and that a gun safety class is in session. A passerby or law enforcement officer that sees a weapon toting person through a classroom window might come to a false, yet reasonable conclusion resulting in a potentially catastrophic action.
8. Since a portion of the course requires use of a shooting range, we believe it is more appropriate for the entire course to be conducted similar venue. There are numerous alternative locations in the Los Angeles region that cater to firearm training that are more suitable for the classes than the Pierce campus.

Excluding historical reenactments and theatrical presentations, we strongly urge you to modify or implement policies and procedures that will keep all guns and gun courses off of taxpayer-funded community college campuses.

The Council acknowledges that gun safety is imperative to gun ownership and does not question one’s right to legal gun ownership.

In conclusion, we find that providing a venue on a densely populated public campus where a gun is present, concurrently with and adjacent to other classes, youth sporting activities, and other community activities is inappropriate, alarming and potentially unsafe.

Sincerely,

Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council



Scott Silverstein, Chair