



## Message from the NaBITA President

January 4, 2016

Dear NaBITA Members,

As we have recently completed our 7th Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX, I want to thank each of our keynote and featured speakers, concurrent presenters, Institute faculty, and the NaBITA staff for their hard work and commitment to making your experience a great one. But mostly I want to thank each of you for your attendance. Your obvious dedication to assisting persons of concern, while keeping your campuses safe, was apparent in your attention and conversations.

While many of you were attending the Threat Assessment Institute on November 21, the Associated Press published the article, *Effectiveness of College Threat Assessment Teams is Debated*. Foley (2015) states that, “[BITs] are a work in progress, and their effectiveness and fairness are a matter of debate.” NaBITA’s Executive Director Brian Van Brunt responds in the article by explaining that some schools with teams do not operate based on NaBITA’s principles. This type of criticism is a good thing. Criticism means that others are paying attention, criticism causes us to take pause and be introspective, and criticism is an agent of change.

Legislation that requires each institution of higher education to have a behavioral intervention team is already in place in several states, such as Virginia and Illinois. I have asked your 2017 NaBITA President-elect Carolyn Reinach Wolf to assemble a committee to investigate and develop similar legislation at the federal level. Carolyn is an accomplished attorney and currently serves as Executive Partner with Abrams Fensterman and director of its mental health law practice. To support this committee’s effort, let me ask each of you to send me stories of successful intervention by your schools’ BIT. We are all too familiar with the tragedies that occur; so share how your team used the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool, SIVRA-35, team member cooperation, and other forms of data gathering to deescalate a situation. It may be that the person of concern was able to return or continue as a successful member of your community, or they may have been removed. We will use these stories to impress upon Congress the effectiveness and necessity of BITs.

Additionally, I have asked NaBITA Board Member Peggy Scott to chair an awards and recognition committee in an effort to honor you, the NaBITA membership, at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference next fall. Peggy serves as Director, Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities at Stephen F. Austin State University. I am looking forward to seeing what her committee brings forward. Please save the date for the 2016 annual conference November 13-15, and Campus Threat Management Institute November 13-17, in San Antonio.

With the current national dialogue focused on acts of targeted violence in higher education and elsewhere, and with more states like Texas moving to allow concealed carry of firearms on our campuses, we must be proactive and lead this conversation. The membership of NaBITA is the expert voice in the room.



As your President, I will be working with Executive Director Brian Van Brunt and the partners of The NCHERM Group to represent your interests and concerns. I believe this next year will bring increased external scrutiny to our BITs. But, I also believe that with this will come great opportunity to grow our organization and discipline, laying the foundation for a national response.

Let me hear from you.

Sincerely,

Chip Reese, Ed.D.  
President, NaBITA