



winston-salem state university
emergency booklet

Initiatives toward creating a safer campus environment 2007

WINSTON
SALEM
STATE
UNIVERSITY

acknowledgement

Dear Alumni and Friends:

As tragedy after tragedy continues to occur on our college campuses across the country, Winston-Salem State University administration and campus safety units are reviewing campus safety measures. It is vitally important to do everything we can to create and maintain a secure campus environment so that the university family and parents feel that the campus is safe.

To this end, this booklet will give you an inside look into some of the initiatives chief administrators from WSSU, the University of North Carolina General Administration, local leaders, and students are doing to create a safer campus environment, and to ensure that a safe campus is attainable by working together for the betterment of the university and our local community.

We hope this booklet will leave you informed and confident that WSSU is doing all we can do to create a better and safer campus environment.

Sincerely,

The Office of Marketing and Communications
Winston-Salem State University

letter from the interim chancellor

To the University Community, Friends and Supporters:

The unbelievable and tragic shootings at Virginia Tech University have left many of us shaken. I cannot stress enough that all life is sacred, and resolution to problems can be obtained without violence. Please help people in your sphere of influence see that there are always better solutions than violence, either to self or others. If you believe a student or visitor is considering destructive or violent action, you should contact Campus Police/Safety immediately. We need to help each other keep each other safe.

Please know that we are systematically studying on-campus and off-campus safety through the Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety. However, we need your help to insure that we have as safe a campus as possible. To that end, students, please make sure that all residence hall doors are locked and are not left propped open and unattended. Immediately report any unusual behavior to Campus Police. Also, please feel free to contact the co-chairs of the Commission with recommendations on how we can improve campus safety. The co-chairs are Chief Willie Bell and Dr. Melody Pierce. Their emails are bellw@wssu.edu and piercemc@wssu.edu.

The events at Virginia Tech have impacted all of us. If you feel you would like to talk to someone on campus about these events, please go to the student counseling center or contact Dr. Pierce in Student Affairs.

Also, it is important that we all check our emails, university voicemails, and cell phones for messages. If there is a critical incident event on campus, these are among the methods the university will use to keep us all informed.

We need your help in keeping our campus safe. Thank you.



Michelle Howard-Vital
Interim Chancellor



a safer place to live, work and study

new commission will examine safety issues of concern to university, community

by michelle howard-vital, interim chancellor

The shooting involving the death of Sgt. Howard J. Plouff is abhorrent and appalling. We at Winston-Salem State University have a zero-tolerance policy for possession of illegal weapons and acts of violence. Even though statistics from the U.S. Department of Education confirm that college and university campuses are among the safest areas in our country, the sobering reality is that criminal acts associated with educational institutions are on the rise in almost every segment of our nation, unfortunately, even here in North Carolina. College and university crime statistics are important reminders that both the campus and surrounding community can use to gauge their safety and take proactive steps to avoid and prevent campus crime. Winston-Salem State University, along with our surrounding community, our state and our nation, stands ready to advocate community safety and security.

Like most institutions of higher education, WSSU is influenced by a variety of societal values and norms. The majority of enrolled students are seeking to learn and to contribute positively to society, and we constantly encourage this behavior and responsibility. While we regret the ill-advised actions of a few students, those actions should not blot out the positive social actions of thousands of students who have devoted themselves to improving the lives of others in this community. Our students are committed to the type of accountability it takes to develop their minds academically and to the dedication it takes to build a bonding and lasting relationship with their surrounding community. However, because every life is so sacred, I am taking this opportunity to emphasize the university's commitment to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the university community and of citizens in the surrounding community.

I have established a Commission on Campus and Community Safety to more closely examine safety issues, and I have charged the commission to report its findings, recommendations and implementation schedule by June 30. The commission - consisting of WSSU faculty, staff, students and representatives of the wider community - is chaired by WSSU Police Chief Willie Bell and Melody Pierce, WSSU vice

chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services. Representatives from the City of Winston-Salem's Mayor's Office, the Winston-Salem City Council, the Winston-Salem Police Department, and the Forsyth County District Attorney's Office have agreed to serve on the commission. Members of the WSSU Board of Trustees and the WSSU Student Government Association will also be a part of this commission. The first meeting of the commission occurred March 19.

The commission will review the entirety of the university's relationship with a student from the admissions process through graduation, including the social context in which teaching and learning take place. Recommendations will be made and implemented based on best practices at other institutions in maintaining an academically stimulating and safe environment for students, faculty, staff and the contiguous community. WSSU is obligated to both its campus and surrounding community to implement policies and procedures that will ensure safety and security for everyone. We are committed to our zero-tolerance policies, and we will continue to enforce them with a firm hand, making no exceptions.

WSSU cares deeply about its students and the neighboring community; we will continue to strive for a mutually nurturing and beneficial relationship with various populations in our region. Our history and heritage are deeply rooted within the Winston-Salem community. We are a part of this great city; the community's concerns are our concerns. Just as our focus is on higher learning and academics, we equally emphasize social responsibility, honor and respect.

As this wonderful city has freely given unto us, we intend to continue giving back to it. Let us continue to work alongside each other, equally bearing the load of responsibility for and to each other. Although we may stand together in grief, we also stand together in our efforts to prevent this type of tragedy from occurring in the future. It is incumbent upon us all to recognize that we're all responsible as a community to foster an environment of responsible living in a diverse society — and we must work together to achieve that goal.

*“Winston-Salem State University
cares deeply about its students
and the neighboring community”*



charge to chancellor's commission on campus and community safety

Mr. Willie Bell, Chief, WSSU Public Safety Department, Co-chair
Dr. Melody Pierce, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs, Co-chair
Dr. Percy Caldwell, WSSU, Athletic Director
Dr. Alvin Atkinson, Interim Director, Center for Community Safety
Dr. Michael Sutton, Assistant Provost, Undergraduate Programs
Dr. Merdis McCarter, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Mr. Jonathan Martin, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor
Mr. Ivey Brown, WSSU, Attorney
Winston-Salem Police Department, member
Dr. James Hash Sr., WSSU Board of Trustees
Mr. Derwick Page, Deputy City Manager
Mr. Kemal Atkins, Director, Academic and Student Affairs, UNC GA
Ms. Tiffany Turner, Miss WSSU, Student
Mr. Nigel Alston, vice chair, WSSU Board Of Trustees
Mr. Tim Pittman, Counselor, A.H. Ray Student Health Center
Ms. Linda Inman, Director, Housing and Residence Life
Dr. Dennis Felder, Associate Professor, School of Education and Human Performance
Dr. Michael Magruder, Associate Professor/Director of Bands, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Larry Little, Associate Professor, Social Science, President, Black Men for Change

March 1, 2007

Greetings.

I am inviting you to participate in a very important Commission for WSSU. Due to the events that led to the tragic death of a Winston-Salem police officer and earlier events involving our students with similar results, it is essential that the university community examine the climate for safety on campus, review types of cases that necessitate student judicial hearings, the social context in which teaching and learning exists, safety policies and procedures, patterns of related, unlawful activities, and best practices in maintaining an academically stimulating and safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and the contiguous community.

The charge to the Commission is to 1) examine the campus climate at WSSU and identify areas where changes are needed, 2) review WSSU's policies and practices aimed at promoting safety on and off-campus, 3) review the effectiveness of the Student Judicial System and the profile of students who receive sanctions from the judicial system or law enforcement, 4) identify options for students to be engaged in campus activities, mentorship activities, or internship activities with a significant member of the campus or external community, 5) assess the overall campus climate for building respectful relationships and dealing with conflict within the context of a broader culture that promotes and influences behavior detrimental to the community and institution.

The Commission is also charged with identifying best practices for improving the climate for safety on campus and in the surrounding community. The Commission is requested to submit a written report that discusses its findings, recommendations, and timetable for implementation, by June 30, 2007. Analysis of student interviews should also be included in the report.

The Commission has a broad and diverse membership, by design, to ensure that the aforementioned study will benefit from the perspectives and skills of a diverse group of community members. Since the Commission is rather large in number, it is recommended that the Commission organize itself into subcommittees.

university leader announces to trustees the establishment of commission on campus and community safety

Winston-Salem State University interim Chancellor Michelle Howard-Vital, in an effort to more closely examine campus and community safety issues, has established the Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety and charged the commission to report its findings, recommendations and implementation timetable by June 30, she reported to WSSU trustees in March.

"We must not shy away from any issue that affects the safety of our campus community or the larger community," said Howard-Vital to the board at a regularly scheduled meeting. "Our first priority is the safety of our students and the community. If we have problems on our campus, or if our campus safety is compromised by negative outside influences, these issues must be addressed."

Howard-Vital's establishment of the Commission is part of the university's continuing review and enhancement of its campus safety policy. The review was heightened in the aftermath of the tragic death of Winston-Salem Police Sgt. Howard Plouff, who was shot and killed Feb. 23, in the parking lot of the Red Rooster, a local nightclub. Keith Antoine Carter, a WSSU student, has been charged with Sgt. Plouff's murder.

The first meeting of the Commission was March 19. The Commission, which

consists of WSSU faculty, staff, students and representatives of the wider community, is co-chaired by Willie Bell, WSSU Police Chief, and Dr. Melody Pierce, WSSU vice chancellor for Student Affairs. Representatives from the City of Winston-Salem's Mayor's Office, Police Department, and the Forsyth County District Attorney's Office also agreed to serve on the Commission.

"The Winston-Salem Police Department will work collaboratively with this commission on a comprehensive plan that will provide a safer environment for Winston-Salem State University faculty, staff, and students as well as the citizens of this community," said Winston-Salem Police Chief Patricia Norris.

Forsyth County District Attorney Tom Keith called the formation of the Commission a bold move of vital importance to the safety and well-being of the entire community. "We look forward to working with the university's leadership, its campus police and especially the students to help keep the campus safe," said Keith.

The Commission is examining the campus environment, campus police practices, university policies related to mentorships, internships and other current student non-academic engagement activities and is identifying best practices for improving the climate for safety on campus and in the surrounding community.

The Commission was charged with making recommendations on ways to enhance campus safety, teach students individual conflict resolution and recognition of behavior that can be detrimental to the community, off-campus safety guidelines, student judicial sanctions and other activities related to factors that may influence or discourage certain behavior.

As part of the Commission's work, student interviews are being conducted and analyzed.

WSSU students held a candlelight vigil Feb. 28, to honor the life and memory of Sgt. Plouff. WSSU student organizations sponsored a forum after the vigil to discuss their concerns about what happened and to hear from the campus and Winston-Salem City police about on- and off-campus safety issues.



howard-vital responds to safety inquiries

by taylor shaw

When any university system experiences a crisis of the magnitude that occurred on the Virginia Tech campus, other universities mourn the tragedy and empathize deeply. The University of North Carolina General Administration reacted immediately to double-check that all the constituent institutions are taking every step possible to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. Following a video conference on public safety, each institution was asked to submit its campus safety plan for review. As well, each institution was asked to review their residence hall safety measures and to be sure the following initiatives are in place:

- An anonymous telephone number for individuals to call when they see suspicious behavior
- A card system to limit access to residence halls to residents and their guests only
- An alarm system that indicates if a door is propped open so that access to residence halls by unauthorized individuals is not possible
- Security cameras at all residence halls
- A person monitoring the individuals who enter residence halls (through ID checks or other measures)

Interim Chancellor Michelle Howard-Vital responded immediately to the General Administration's request. She forwarded the university's Emergency Preparedness Plan and mentioned again that on March 6, she had created a Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety to review all safety measures currently in place. She provided the anonymous telephone number (to report suspicious behavior)

that is used on the WSSU campus, and she assured the General Administration that the university has an alarm system on the residence hall doors when doors are left open.

She stated that university safety officers monitor 30 security screens from security cameras around the campus, and security guards patrol areas where there are no cameras. In residence halls where security guards patrol in the general area, residence halls are designed with one entrance/exit where an individual checks identification cards during official, visitation hours.

Safety officers are always present on campus, although guards are not posted in all academic buildings. Plans are in place to purchase a mobile, emergency management command center that would house four or five safety officers, a wireless switchboard, additional cameras and egress monitoring systems. However, funds are needed for updating present equipment and for hiring additional safety officers.

In response to the tragic events at Virginia Tech, WSSU is hiring a security consultant to determine how to cover residence halls with a combination of technology and people surveillance. As well, Howard-Vital expressed the need for a camera surveillance system to monitor all academic buildings and common areas.

Safety issues on the WSSU campus are continually evaluated and emergency planning responses are updated as needed. Students, faculty, staff, and the community are encouraged to send any suggestions or concerns they have to Chief Willie Bell who is the contact person for safety at the WSSU campus and who is co-chair of the Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety (bellw@wssu.edu).

plans in place for campus emergency

by taylor shaw

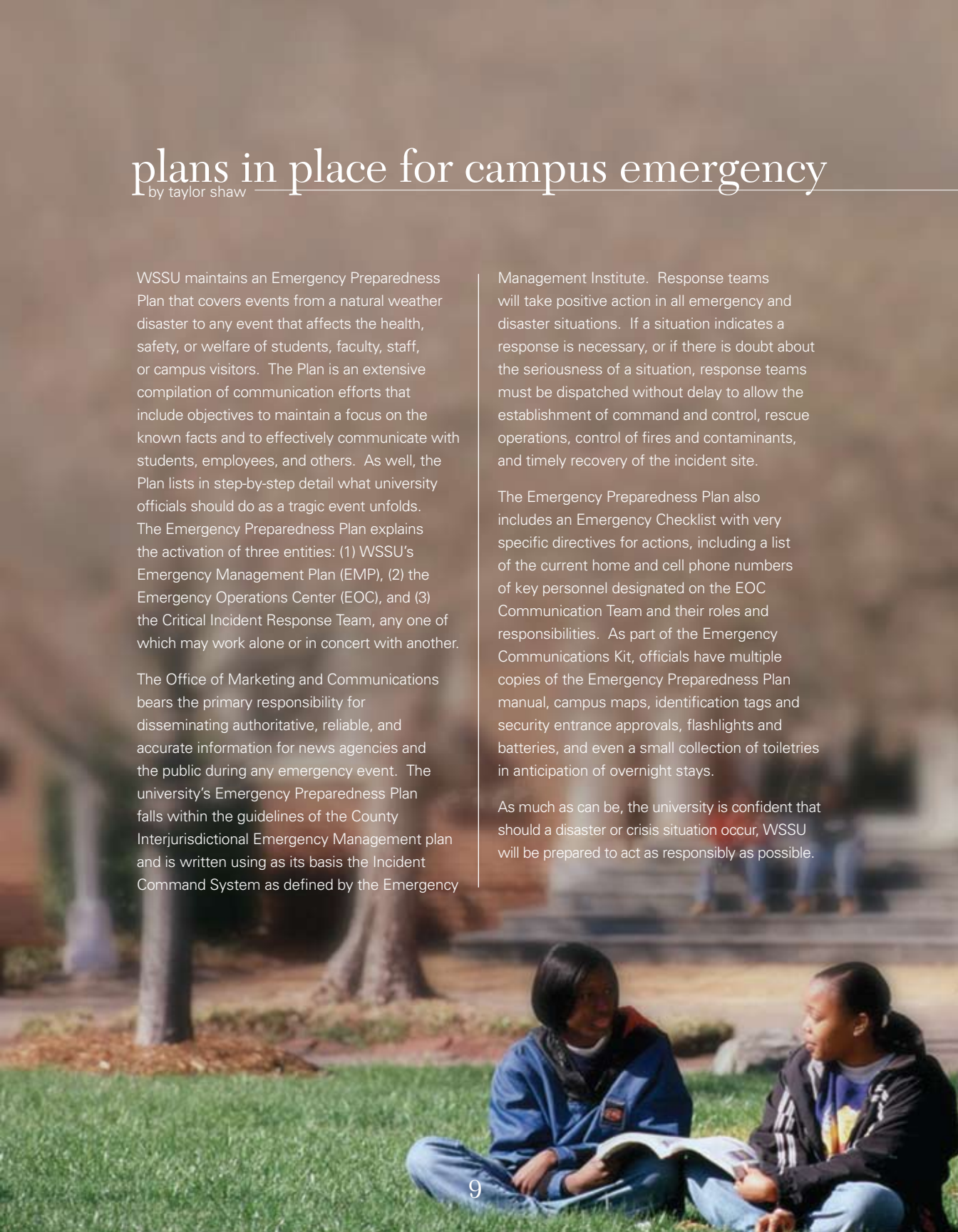
WSSU maintains an Emergency Preparedness Plan that covers events from a natural weather disaster to any event that affects the health, safety, or welfare of students, faculty, staff, or campus visitors. The Plan is an extensive compilation of communication efforts that include objectives to maintain a focus on the known facts and to effectively communicate with students, employees, and others. As well, the Plan lists in step-by-step detail what university officials should do as a tragic event unfolds. The Emergency Preparedness Plan explains the activation of three entities: (1) WSSU's Emergency Management Plan (EMP), (2) the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and (3) the Critical Incident Response Team, any one of which may work alone or in concert with another.

The Office of Marketing and Communications bears the primary responsibility for disseminating authoritative, reliable, and accurate information for news agencies and the public during any emergency event. The university's Emergency Preparedness Plan falls within the guidelines of the County Interjurisdictional Emergency Management plan and is written using as its basis the Incident Command System as defined by the Emergency

Management Institute. Response teams will take positive action in all emergency and disaster situations. If a situation indicates a response is necessary, or if there is doubt about the seriousness of a situation, response teams must be dispatched without delay to allow the establishment of command and control, rescue operations, control of fires and contaminants, and timely recovery of the incident site.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan also includes an Emergency Checklist with very specific directives for actions, including a list of the current home and cell phone numbers of key personnel designated on the EOC Communication Team and their roles and responsibilities. As part of the Emergency Communications Kit, officials have multiple copies of the Emergency Preparedness Plan manual, campus maps, identification tags and security entrance approvals, flashlights and batteries, and even a small collection of toiletries in anticipation of overnight stays.

As much as can be, the university is confident that should a disaster or crisis situation occur, WSSU will be prepared to act as responsibly as possible.



students feel safe at wssu

by taylor shaw and erin perkins

In an informal question and answer poll, students enjoying the sunshine around the bell tower answered questions regarding their feelings about safety on campus. Everyone was aware of the recent tragedy that occurred on the Virginia Tech campus and could only imagine the anguish that students there are feeling. Many students said they were praying for the Virginia Tech students involved and the victims' families. Many students said they are talking about the event with friends and others and that the event has raised their awareness of and opened a dialogue about safety.

Other measures students are taking to assure their safety are:

- Reading emails from the campus security office
- Trying to get to know people who were formerly only acquaintances
- Making sure that they do not walk alone at night
- Talking on a cell phone to indicate a potential "witness" should someone try to do harm
- Noticing anything strange or out of the ordinary
- Learning how to protect themselves when no help is nearby
- Avoiding disturbances (leave the scene and notify authorities)
- Participating in safety programs offered in residence halls
- Making administrative officials aware of potential problems

Students had some suggestions for the Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety:

- Campus police should be more strict, especially with locals having unsecured access to the campus.
- Campus police should be more available to receive emergency calls.
- Campus police should respond faster when they are called.
- Have the administration require that students know campus procedures and policies.
- Have campus police check more for safety and security instead of issuing citations.
- Make sure that officials always check IDs.

Students at WSSU said they generally feel safe, although they are aware that they must take individual precautions, like always locking their doors and being mindful of their surroundings.

One student summed up her feelings and those of the other students by saying, "I think that you still have to watch your back, but for the most part, I do feel safe."





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