

# Campus Safety Bulletin

January 2015

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**PERSONAL SAFETY:  
HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?**



**CAMPUS  
EMERGENCIES  
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Providing for the safety and well-being of our campus community is the professional and sworn responsibility of Campus Police and the top priority of the Police & Public Safety Department. To that end, the department continuously evaluates campus safety and security operations to be able to take any action necessary to strengthen and improve safety on campus.

### **A National Debate on Safety**

Over the past few months, national news coverage has centered around tensions between minority groups and law enforcement, leading to concerns about the ethics of some law enforcement practices. This concern, along with ongoing random shootings on or near college campuses across the nation, can understandably create fear and anxiety within an already stressful higher learning environment. Collectively, these factors have stirred a desire to heighten personal safety among some and conversely generated concern about allowing the possession of concealed weapons in public places among others.

### **Abuse of Personal Rights**

The right to carry handguns on public property in North Carolina comes with a great responsibility. Some 21 states have an outright ban on concealed weapons on campuses, according to data compiled in November 2014 by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Two dozen states leave it up to individual universities and colleges to decide.

Sometimes, this personal right is abused. For example, imagine you are sitting in class trying to stay focused on a lecture or maybe chatting with fellow students in a common area. Suddenly, that peaceful scene is interrupted by what sounds like gun fire. "Impossible!" you think. "Never here!" But then you hear multiple shots along with anxious screams. What once was a calm, ordinary day has now become chaotic as people duck for cover or try to run to safety. You're in disbelief when you finally see someone dressed in all black, randomly firing multiple weapons. Unfortunately, this is something we don't have to imagine. It is a very real example of how someone takes their perceived rights too far.

### **Rights Come with Shared Responsibility**

Rights to maintain personal safety in public is a shared responsibility between citizens and law enforcement. To be clear, even sworn law enforcement officers must abide by rules of engagement. So with this right to maintain personal safety comes a greater responsibility to exercise good judgment and promote weapons safety to ensure the safety and welfare of others.

It is my hope that from this bulletin one would gather the importance of having and exercising your rights, but also being sensitive to the concerns and safety of fellow citizens. Without good judgment, your fears and insecurities can escalate into a greater fear for everyone.