

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
November 5, 2009

Emergency Preparedness

Solemn dates are a part of our collective history and become permanently connected with tragic events. It is difficult to imagine that any American alive at that time will forget the horrific events of September 11th. For those of us in education, we remember dates connected with tragic attacks on our students: April 20 and April 16 commemorate the tragic events of Columbine High School in 1999 and Virginia Tech in 2007.

With those dates always in mind, our University continues its efforts to make our classrooms, offices and other meeting places as safe as possible. A commitment to emergency management preparation is contained with our University Strategic Plan -

Goal 4: Provide a state-of-the-art, sustainable and safe learning, living and working environment.

Initiative 5: Improve, implement, and communicate the emergency preparedness plans.

To assist in this process our strategic Emergency Preparedness Team under the direction of Vice President Jerry Scoby is charged with coordinating our response to everything from inclement weather to unforeseeable tragic events.

At the October 20th meeting of the Emergency Response Team, this larger cross-divisional working group reviewed progress that has been made on a number of different safety initiatives. The steps that have been taken to ensure that all members of the Ferris community are alerted to a potential threat are impressive. Our "layered" approach to emergency communications includes:

- Blue light emergency phones
- Classroom Voice Over Internet Protocol phones
- Instant Messaging for classrooms
- Outdoor emergency broadcasts (connected to the county/city system, City Watch)
- Electronic sign messaging
- Ferris Web site/Lotus Notes/My FSU announcements
- Cable TV announcements
- City Watch text alerts

Much progress has been made on integrating and expanding these systems. For example, the City Watch emergency text alert system reaches approximately 4,600 people. If you have not done so already, you can sign up to receive City Watch alerts through the MyFSU home page.

The first of three phases of the classroom phone rollout has been completed. Currently we reach approximately 170 classrooms with Voice Over Internet Phones, a strong start. The University has installed 37 new blue light emergency phones across campus. This represents the

near-completion of this project. Two more phones will soon be installed, and the 40th and final blue light phone will be sited at the new Michigan College of Optometry building.

As we continue to prepare for possible emergencies, it is important that each member of our University community be prepared for possible emergencies. Hopefully we will never confront one of these unthinkable situations. However, if we should, our collective and individual preparation will be of critical importance.

Policy Web Site and New Policies

As part of our continued emphasis on implementing the University strategic plan, sharing information, and creating more transparent processes, General Counsel Miles Postema has led an effort to bring together links to university-wide policies so they can be accessed from a single Web page. These policies are now accessible at - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/staff/policies> . Additionally we want to make potential new university-wide policies available on this site for review and comment by everyone in the University community before they are adopted.

Related to emergency preparedness there are two new policies under review. These are a Safe Campus Policy Letter and a Threat Assessment and Behavior Review Policy. The policy letter regarding Campus Safety outlines the University's commitment to safety, and details some of the acts or threats of violence that would result in disciplinary action. It also outlines reporting procedures and officials.

The Threat Assessment and Behavior Review Policy is designed to help identify the level of risk to self and others as the result of an individual's behavior and the possible need for intervention. This applies both to students and employees. The policy defines the role of the Behavior Review Team and Threat Assessment Team, prohibited conducts, reporting issues and more. Membership for both the Threat Assessment Team and Behavior Review Team has been established with specialized education preparation for these faculty and staff. You may recall that in the Virginia Tech tragedy, the perpetrator, Seung-Huio Cho, was known as a person of concern, but there was no university mechanism to work across divisions to assess the potential threat he was to that campus.

The Safe Campus Policy Letter and the Threat Assessment and Behavior Review Policy are available at this web address for your review and a link on the page for your feedback - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/staff/policies/policyunderconst.htm> .

Thank you for your continued efforts in emergency preparedness and for taking time to review these new policies.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President