

April 18, 2007

The terrible events at Virginia Tech both shock and sadden each of us at Ferris State University. Such loss of life at any university affects all of us deeply. As educators, our greatest joy is in seeing students seize upon new-found passions and become aware of the extent of their intellectual abilities. Witnessing great potential cut short, along with the lives of those dedicated to teaching, is nothing short of tragic.

Earlier today I extended the condolences of our university to their entire Virginia Tech community through a letter to their President, Dr. Charles Steger. At times like these each of us feels the need to connect with others to offer them the strength of our support. I encourage you to reach out to our friends and colleagues in Virginia. At Virginia Tech they have established two resources that are available for you. The first is an April 16th Memorial Website, where you can share your condolences, thoughts, and prayers - <http://rosa.hosting.vt.edu/index.php/memorial/> . The second is the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund - http://www.vt.edu/tragedy/memorial_fund.php. This will be used to remember and honor the victims of these tragic events and to aid in the healing process. The fund will be used to cover expenses for grief counseling, memorials, communication expenses, comfort expenses, and incidental needs.

Such tragedy intrudes upon our sense of well being and safety. It can make us question what is right and what is wrong with our world. On our campus there are resources available to faculty, staff and students to assist them with feelings of anxiety and distress. I would encourage anyone needing assistance to contact the counseling center at 591-5968. After hours they may be reached through the campus police.

The physical safety of our faculty, staff, and students is our highest concern. Working across our campus and community, public safety officers prepare for a wide range of emergencies. Based on these most recent events we will go back and review how our campus can prevent, notify, and respond to an event of this nature. In doing so we pledge to provide each of you with an understanding of how we should respond in emergency situations.

As we prepare for the end of this semester and for commencement, please take a moment to remember students in Virginia who will not graduate, and their professors who will no longer teach. These events remind us how precious and fragile life can be. It is my hope that each of us in our own and collective way will reach across the miles to express our love, support, and sorrow to the families, friends, and loved ones of those whose lives were tragically cut short at Virginia Tech.

President David L. Eisler