

Submitted to the Charlotte Observer
Feb. 14, 2008

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UNC Charlotte

CAMPUS SAFETY

UNC Charlotte is a rapidly expanding public research university in one of the country's fastest-growing regions. The daily life of our campus resembles that of a small city—more than 25,000 faculty, staff, and students come and go at all hours. Approximately 4,800 students live on campus. I also live on campus, with my wife and daughter.

With growth and change comes a degree of turbulence. Although we would like to think that the borders of our campus offer the protection of the proverbial ivory tower, the reality is that we can expect to be the target of those who would assault, rob, or burglarize their fellow citizens.

We take this new reality very seriously. As a result, we are continually reexamining our own ability to prevent and respond to criminal activity. Just this month, a new 17-member Campus Safety and Security Committee began work on developing a comprehensive plan to assure the physical safety and security of the main campus and, to the extent that we are able, the surrounding neighborhood. This group will not only re-examine all of the existing security-related programs and procedures we already have in place, but identify gaps in our security that require attention. We'll look at the entire spectrum of safety-related measures—analysis of actual crime data, threat assessment, crime prevention, safety education, and public information strategies.

The Campus Safety and Security Committee will build upon a number of safety initiatives we have rolled out over the past two years. Some of those are based on well-tested policing and safety procedures while others are more innovative.

We start by looking in our own backyard, in some of the neighborhoods surrounding the campus. Most of the violent crime we have dealt with at UNC Charlotte actually occurs off campus. Some privately-owned apartments and condominiums which rent to our students have reached an age where physical property conditions are in decline. Their parking lots can attract young thieves, many of whom carry guns.

Of course, we don't have the resources to purchase any of these properties for redevelopment even if they were for sale. But we can and are looking at the opportunities for encouraging private sector investment. And we've launched collaborative programs with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police in door-to-door crime prevention campaigns at nearby off-campus apartment complexes and at a "lemonade stand" for off-campus residents set up across from the campus' main entrance.

UNC Charlotte Police also offer safety escort services for students, staff, and faculty. Before 2006, that service was strictly on campus. Last year, the escort service expanded with the new boundaries of the cooperative agreement between campus police and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police. By late spring, we expect to have developed a plan to expand our safety escort service to be available 20 hours per day, every day, and to serve both those who need safety escorts and persons with disabilities. We're also looking to expand the physical presence of law

enforcement personnel on campus by supplementing our Campus Police workforce with trained security officers.

Our annual “Safe Walk” program allows students and administrators to jointly identify safety-related conditions that require attention. In response to “Safe Walk” recommendations over the past two years, I have allocated more than \$560,000 to address these conditions.

The University posts Campus Advisories on the UNC Charlotte web site and emails them to all students, staff and faculty when crimes occur on campus or in the vicinity. Although this may have the unintended effect of making the University City area appear more prone to criminal activity than other parts of the city, we believe that vigilance is one of our most important crime prevention tools.

There are some positive signs that these efforts are working. Although property crime has continued to rise incrementally, violent crime in the University City area is down substantially from a year ago. But, regardless of the data, the well-being of our community is paramount and we are using all our talent and resources to help ensure a campus that is as safe as we can make it.

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