

Salisbury University Campus/Community Safety Initiative

One of the foundational pillars of Salisbury University is providing a safe and welcoming community that allows all campus constituents to learn in an environment conducive to scholarship and the acquisition of knowledge. However, like many college campuses across the nation, Salisbury University must confront the reality of potential campus violence and other crises making national headlines. In addition, recent local events involving members of the SU community have made us aware that our students, faculty, and staff are vulnerable and are feeling victimized in and around the campus perimeter.

As A Maryland University of National Distinction, it is paramount that Salisbury University continues to actively seek solutions to minimize risks to members of our community as well as expand existing partnerships with students, local governmental officials, police agencies, and other important University and community stakeholders.

Purpose:

Dr. Janet Dudley-Eshbach, President of Salisbury University, recently appointed a Campus Safety Committee—consisting of key University leaders including students, administrators and faculty—to advise her and the University community on actions that can be taken to further the University’s efforts in creating a safe campus environment.

As a result of a series of meetings with campus and community stakeholders and sparked by increased concerns raised by Salisbury University students living on and off campus, a series of objectives has been developed that are designed to offer a comprehensive approach to addressing campus and community safety issues.

Objectives:

- develop and implement safety procedures designed to augment existing programs to create a safer campus community for students, faculty, staff and visitors;
- assess and highlight past and current safety practices;
- improve student, faculty and staff awareness of local and University safety initiatives and practices;
- engage the University community and key stakeholders in a concrete dialogue about real and perceived threats to individual and campus safety;
- promote and enhance cooperation between local landlords and the University;

- promote and enhance cooperation among city officials, local and state police agencies, and the University;
- encourage and educate students, faculty and staff to take personal responsibility for their own safety.

A. Community: The following safety initiatives are designed to connect the community to the campus through cooperation and collaboration:

- 1. Increase University Police Presence at Off-Campus, Perimeter Locations -**
Salisbury University Police, working in partnership with other local police agencies, will develop a Memorandum of Understanding that provides the University a more active and frequent presence in certain off-campus, student-concentrated housing areas during critical periods.
- 2. Enhance Campus and Pedestrian Lighting –** Salisbury University Police will conduct monthly lighting safety inspections to identify areas in need of increased lighting and to ensure safe walkways for students, faculty and staff in and around the campus. In addition, needs of increased lighting will be incorporated into the University Facilities Master Plan.
- 3. Increase Visibility and Support of the Campus Escort Service and Saferide –** The University will provide students with important information explaining the availability of the campus escort system and the student-sponsored Saferide program as well as how best to utilize those campus services. In addition, the University is working to provide an additional van to Saferide to expand the capabilities of this successful program.
- 4. Engage Neighborhood Compact –** Under the leadership of the Dean of Students and Student Government Association, the Neighborhood Compact will focus on student safety issues including renters' rights and responsibilities, lighting concerns and transportation/commuting safety.
- 5. Enhance Role of the Neighborhood Relations Committee -**
The Neighborhood Relations Committee of the Town/Gown Council will focus on safety, student/community concerns, and active approaches to problem resolution.
- 6. Create a Student Risk Reduction Educational Plan –** The Student Affairs Office and student leaders will develop a plan to increase student awareness and personal safety.
 - a. Enhance Residence Life to Apartment Life Transition Programs –** Residence Life will provide education on personal safety in off-campus housing communities to all students planning to move off campus.

- b. **Safety Poster Campaign** – Working with student leadership, Student Affairs will launch a poster campaign in the coming weeks to provide key safety information, facts and strategies.
- c. **Facilitate a Safety Awareness Week** - In collaboration with several student organizations and the Student Affairs Office, the first week of each academic semester will be designated for distributing helpful and timely safety tips.

B. Campus: The following initiatives are designed to strengthen safety within the campus community through enhanced communication, education and advocacy:

1. **Implement Comprehensive Emergency Communication Plan** – The Emergency Alert and Response System has been upgraded with the purchase of a campus-wide text messaging system allowing key University officials to communicate important and timely information to student, faculty, staff and community members regarding any threatening conditions. Additionally, a campus-wide siren system has been installed as an added measure to alert the University community to situations of imminent danger.

Emergency Operation Center - Further, the University has established an Emergency Operation Center in the new University Police offices at the East Campus Complex.

Campus Emergency Plan – Under the direction of Salisbury University's Chief of Police, a thorough review of the University's campus emergency plan was recently conducted and updated to help ensure accuracy and compliance with local, state and federal guidelines.

2. **Enhance Building Safety Protocols** – New University procedures are under development where each building on campus will have staff assigned to respond immediately in the case of a campus emergency.
3. **Create a Coordinated Response Team** – A Coordinated Response Team was established to create a safety net for students who have been identified as academically, psychologically and physically distressed.
4. **Create a Mental Health Task Force** – Comprised of students, faculty and administrative staff, this task force was established and is conducting a comprehensive review of SU policies and/or procedures concerning the emotional and psychological needs of students.
5. **Implement Emergency On-Call Team** – Key Student Affairs professionals share an on-call rotation to respond to campus and student emergencies, as well as collaborate with local law enforcement and emergency medical facilities, to provide optimal care for SU students in crisis.

C. Student: The following initiatives have been designed and initiated by student leaders and student organizations to offer education, outreach, support and advocacy to the student body:

- 1. Increase Advocacy** – Student leaders, partnering with University administration, are meeting with local police agencies and city officials to communicate student safety and protection needs within the Salisbury University community.
- 2. Increase Safety Education** – The Student Government Association is planning a safety campaign to educate and communicate with students on community safety issues. Events include:

Campus Safety Week – The week before Spring Break, the Student Government Association provided students with information about how to stay safe both on and off campus, including a door-hanger information card campaign at off-campus residences.

Safety Forum – A student safety forum was held to provide a voice to students who have been victimized by crime in the Salisbury community.

Student Safety Group – An action group of student leaders formed a student organization to advocate for student safety in their community as well as to educate students on how to keep themselves safe.

Renters Fair – With feedback obtained from students through an SGA-sponsored survey, invitations were extended only to landlords and local rental agencies that have proven to provide safe and reasonable off-campus student housing. The SGA provided resources to assist students in making informed, safe decisions. The University Police provided crime information for the local area, and the city compliance officer provided information on safe housing.

Conclusion

Confronted with a range of global, national and local crises, safety has re-emerged as an important concern for us all. Salisbury University takes matters of personal and community safety very seriously. As demonstrated by many of the aforementioned initiatives, current and proposed, we are committed to implementing best practices in all that we do and providing a safe educational environment for every member of the Salisbury University community.