



February 15, 2008

To the USF Community:

Yesterday's events at Northern Illinois University are all too reminiscent of recent campus tragedies. We once again find ourselves shocked by these acts of violence, especially in communities that are designed to teach and learn and explore each person's capacity to contribute greater good to the world. We join with others in offering our prayers for the victims, for those injured, for the families affected and for the entire Northern Illinois community as it responds to this unimaginable tragedy. May we all find strength and support as they grieve the loss of innocent lives.

At times like this, we examine our own capabilities and response mechanisms. I encourage each member of the campus community to learn more about USF's emergency disaster preparedness information, which is available online at

http://www.usfca.edu/public_safety/Disaster_Preparedness/Disaster_Pre_Info.html

Should you ever need immediate help in the highly unlikely event of a security emergency, note that our Public Safety dispatch is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can report any emergency by calling from any campus phone to extension 2911 or 415-422-2911 from an off-campus phone.

If you are a residential student, and at any time would like to speak with someone, please contact your Resident Advisor (RA). S/he can get you in touch with an on-call staff member for additional support. I remind all students that the Counseling and Psychological Services Center is available for free from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at 415-422-6352.

All faculty and staff are reminded that support is also available to you through the Employee Assistance Program, provided by Concern. To access these services, please call 800-344-4222.

University Ministry support services are also available for members of the USF community. They are located in the lower level of Phelan Hall and can be reached at 415-422-4463.

An incident such as this most recent tragedy may inspire questions about personal and campus security. Let me remind the campus that we have security policies in place, that we practice emergency procedures frequently, that we always strive to upgrade and improve our responses and protocols, and that our campus is a safe place located in a complex, urban environment. While there can never be a guarantee of safety in these times, yesterday's incident is also a reminder of our educational challenge to address broader questions such as the nature of violence in our world, the need for compassion and understanding, the obligation to provide care and services for others, the laws and systems that may contribute to or intervene in cycles of violence and the higher calling for educated heart and minds to enhance safety and security for all members of the global community.

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Higgins, Ph.D.

Vice President for University Life and Chief Student Affairs Officer