

Thursday, April 17, 2008

A message from the president

As you know, Oakland University has been dealing with a difficult situation this week. During the past weekend, the Oakland University Police Department discovered threatening messages in restrooms in three separate campus buildings. I called a meeting of our crisis management team on Sunday morning, and with the information we had at hand, we made the difficult decision to close the campus Sunday and Monday. □ OU President Gary D. Russi

That decision was made because our number one priority is to provide a safe campus for our students, faculty and staff. The threats referenced April 14th specifically, so we felt it was in the best interest of the entire campus community to shut down on that day.

Since the weekend, our police department has worked together with officers from the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, the Auburn Hills and Rochester Police Departments and federal agencies to process all the information that has been reported to us as a result of the publicity created by this threat.

(Yesterday, there was an additional instance of provocative graffiti found, but our police department has determined that this was a prank and not a viable threat to the campus.) The coordination of efforts between campus police and law enforcement agencies has been tremendous, and will go a long way toward resolving this matter.

I want to thank you students, faculty and staff for your patience, concern and flexibility as we deal with this. We are at a critical time in the semester and we are abundantly aware that closing the campus on the first day of the final week of classes represented a significant inconvenience to our students and faculty.

We live in a world where threats of violence can never be taken lightly. We cherish our mission to provide an outstanding learning environment for all of our students but that mission must always be tempered by the knowledge that idle threats can disrupt everyday life for all of us.

Please be assured that all measures to enhance campus safety have been implemented, and that no effort has been spared in the process of providing the safety that all of us deserve.

Today, I sent a note to Virginia Tech University President Charles Steger, telling him that the entire Oakland University community is thinking about their students, faculty and staff on this, the first anniversary of the terrible event that happened on their campus one year ago today. We pray that the healing process is ongoing, and I told President Steger that the 32 VTU students and faculty who lost their lives on April 16, 2007 will never be forgotten and will always occupy a special place in our hearts and minds.

We are all a part of the same community. We all strive to provide a quality learning experience for our students. Any disruption of that noble endeavor no matter where it happens or what the circumstances are diminishes us all.

Thank you again for your patience and concern. Working together, we can overcome any situation that compromises our overall goal to educate and invigorate the hearts and minds of all our students.

SUMMARY

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