

Task Force on Campus Security

Report to the Chancellor

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Submitted by

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In April 2010, Chancellor Robert Potts appointed a task force to examine the university's current safety and security practices, and to produce a written report detailing the findings. The task force also was charged with recommending additions or changes that it considered reasonable and practical to enhance safety and security of campus residents, employees, and visitors.

Members were selected to represent the students, faculty, staff, and administration of ASU, as well as the Jonesboro community. Others were appointed because of their area of responsibility on the ASUJ campus. The task force was comprised of:

Dr. William R. Stripling, vice chancellor, Student Affairs, and task force chair
Mr. Patrick Dixon, director, Residence Life
Mr. Adrian Everett, president, Student Government Association, 2010-2011
Dr. Len Frey, dean, College of Business
Dr. Beverly Gilbert, president, Faculty Association
Mr. Gary Harpole, Jonesboro Community representative
Mr. Ed Kremers, vice chancellor, Finance and Administration
Mr. Kevin Linker, president, Graduate Student Council president, 2010-2011
Mr. Randy Martin, president, Staff Senate
Ms. Lucinda McDaniel, university counsel, ASU System

This final report contains: a summary timeline of the actions of the task force (appendix A); minutes from meetings, campus tours, and forums (appendix B); ASUJ's existing security resources (appendix C); campus crime reports and comparisons (appendix D); documentation of input received from students, faculty and, staff regarding the perceived safety of the ASUJ campus (appendix E); and a proposed action plan for addressing safety concerns (appendix F).

Data collection and constituent input

Task force members agreed that input from all constituency groups in the ASUJ campus community was essential for gaining a broad range of safety perceptions. The representatives of the three major constituency groups – students, faculty, and staff – solicited comments and recommendations from their respective groups. Two forums were held to gain additional input from the campus community. Task force members made two physical tours of the ASUJ campus: one tour of the grounds surrounding academic and administrative buildings, and residence halls, and the other of housing areas somewhat removed from the heart of campus, specifically, Academic Circle, Faculty Circle, and student houses. Both tours were conducted at 9:00 p.m., to get an accurate sense of the nighttime environment, which is when most reported crimes occur.

The information collected was compiled into a matrix entitled *Campus Safety Action Plan* (appendix F). This plan was referred to throughout the course of the group's work to develop effective safety solutions that would be meaningful to members of the campus community, and to the Jonesboro community as well.

Other data collected and reviewed by the task force pertained to actual crimes committed on the ASUJ campus as reported in compliance with the Clery Act, a comparison of crime statistics for ASUJ and other Arkansas university campuses, an inventory of ASUJ's existing safety resources and services, and a report on campus attacks jointly produced by the U.S. Secret Service, The U.S. Department of Education, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

Primary areas of concern

According to the input received, safety concerns on campus range from easily resolved matters such as repair of doors and replacement of light bulbs, to more complex policy issues such as background checks for students, and faculty/staff office security measures. In general, the primary concerns were:

1. Insufficient number of university police personnel to patrol campus effectively;
2. Accessibility to university facilities by unauthorized persons;
3. Lack of knowledge about existing safety resources and services;
4. Lack of personal safety awareness and response strategies;
5. Insufficient communication to campus via emergency alerts (delayed or too little information to be helpful, limited instruction for personal response or follow-up);
6. Insufficient nighttime lighting;
7. Insufficient security cameras/monitoring;
8. Insufficient security in residential parking lot during evening hours, specifically Northpark Quads.

It should be noted that the majority of students who provided input stated that they felt ASUJ is, in general, a safe campus, and that personal awareness and behavior are key to avoiding or preventing crime. They agreed that ASUJ could do a better job of publicizing safety resources and services. Students also felt that physical changes should be made to improve lighting, surveillance, and access to facilities across campus. Faculty and staff, on the other hand, were most concerned with evaluation of security policies, procedures, and resources, although many also repeated the students' concerns regarding physical changes to grounds and facilities.

Recommendations

The list of concerns and recommendations received is extensive. Understanding the university's need to provide the most effective solutions with available financial resources, task force members believe that many of the suggestions can be accomplished easily, quickly, and with little additional expense to existing budgets. Some, however, will require significant and long-term funding, particularly for increasing the number of campus police and security personnel.

Following are Task Force recommendations:

1. The task force strongly encourages the addition of police officer positions in the next biennium cycle.
2. Automatically enroll all network users in the Rave Emergency Alert notice system and provide an "opt-out" feature for those who do not wish to receive email or text messages regarding emergencies on the ASU campus.
3. Install new vehicle access gates, add pedestrian gates, and install security cameras in Collegiate Park area.
4. Expand the student patrol service into the core of campus residential facilities.
5. Develop a timeline for upgrading lighting across campus. Facilities Management should develop the timeline according to priority order of projects.
6. Increase number of emergency phones across campus. Paint color for new phone stations should be red; existing brown stations should be repainted red for better daytime visibility.
7. Update Emergency Procedures Handbook (flip chart) and distribute to faculty and staff. Post copies in public areas across campus. Provide the same information online.
8. Develop a marketing plan to promote ASUJ safety resources and practices, and to establish an environment of safety awareness among students, faculty, and staff.
9. Require emergency response training for faculty and staff, and provide similar training to students in all FYE classes, and to other students as requested.
10. Post signage designating areas on campus where security surveillance exists and where crime watch programs are in effect.
11. The Task Force highly supports the City of Jonesboro's proposal for construction of a Jonesboro Police Department precinct to be located on Johnson Avenue near the ASU campus.