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Q & A With New Campus Safety Director

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Eric Dunning, SNC's new senior director of Campus Safety, shares his thoughts about student safety, both personal and material.

Q&A With New Campus Safety Director

*Eric Dunning became senior director of **Campus Safety** in July. Previously, he served 25 years with the Wisconsin village of Ashwaubenon's Department of Public Safety as both a public safety officer and as director of public safety.*

Q: What are some of the main safety concerns on college campuses today?

A: A college campus is no different than all other aspects of society right now, where we have a heightened awareness of active shooters and people committing other violent acts. So what we emphasize here is no different from anywhere there are mass gatherings, such as churches, malls, Packers games and schools. In public areas, everyone should know where there are escape routes. More importantly, if you see something out of place, report it to public officials.

Q: What do parents seem most concerned about, and what is SNC doing about these issues?

A: I think active shooters, sexual violence, and drug and alcohol abuse are the top three concerns of any parents on any college campus. And they are valid concerns. But while some of these dangers have been around a long time, the educational aspects are changing. At student orientation, for example, when we bring freshmen in, we're giving them lots of information and resources about these issues.

We also have the **Campus Emergency Notification System**. If something does happen, whether it's an active shooter or severe weather event, students can get the message across their computers, by text and by cell phone. The Campus Emergency Notification System has been around quite a few years. But a few years ago, it was upgraded to an alert system with more features. There's an app feature where we can communicate to cell phones and laptops and vice versa. So if a student brings up the alert app, it gives options. You can report an incident – say, text in that you saw someone steal a bike – or if you saw an active shooter, there's another button that dials right into Campus Safety.

Q: What are some things students can do to enhance their safety?

A: The biggest thing is to take care of their person and their property. For their property, they need to remember they're no longer living at home, they're in a dorm. So they should keep their doors locked when they aren't there, for example, and keep an eye on their material things. They shouldn't bring things that are overly expensive and hard to replace to campus. As far as personal safety, it goes back to common sense. Both males and females should use the buddy system and always walk with someone else or in groups. You should let your roommates know where you're going when you go out.

One thing I'm finding out real fast is that students should call home once a week, especially freshmen. Parents will call us to check on the welfare of their child because he or she hasn't called home in a while. Or maybe they were texting daily and suddenly a few days go by without a text. We'll go knock on their door to make sure they're all right, and they'll say, "Oops, I just got buried in studying."

Q: How safe is De Pere compared with other college towns?

A: We recently published our **2019 Security & Fire Safety Annual Report**. This report includes crime statistics for the areas adjacent to campus and other non-campus facilities, but it doesn't compare St. Norbert to



On Constant Alert!

All members of the St. Norbert community are encouraged to download a free smartphone application called **Alertus**. The app allows your student to send messages to officers, immediately send out their location, and call **Campus Safety** directly. Ask your student if they've downloaded **the app** yet!

Also in This Issue

This article first appeared in the December 2019 issue of Parents of St. Norbert College. Other features in this edition included:

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Q&A With New Campus Safety Director

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other schools. However, what I can say is that we have professional staff overseeing campus security and safety. And we also have a relationship with the De Pere Police Department and De Pere Fire Department. We also work with the West De Pere Community and St. Norbert College Neighborhood Association and meet regularly with City of De Pere officials and the police department.

updates via @St.
Norbert.

Q: What is one advantage we have safety-wise at St. Norbert?

A: St. Norbert had the foresight to install sprinkler systems in all of the individual dormitory rooms in the older dorms. That's a tremendous advantage, because if there was a fire, it could be contained to one room rather than spread throughout the whole hall. Sprinkler systems are required now in all dorm rooms for new construction, but older dorms may be grandfathered in and aren't always required to have them.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish during your tenure?

A: One of the initiatives is to keep an open relationship within the campus and to be approachable. The only way we will find out information is if we have open lines of communication with students, faculty and staff. We're also working with the administration to update plans of action for major events, whether it be an active shooter or something chemical or environmental.

Q: Can parents do anything to help keep their student safe?

A: The biggest thing is to have an open line of communication with your student. Because it's not just about threats to their safety, but also about people's mental health. There's a lot of stress in college, and not just for freshmen. If people recognize the early warning signs [of mental health distress], whether it's a parent, roommate, faculty or staff, they can report it at SNC's **Share A Concern** and we'll contact the student to help them.

Dec. 13, 2019

St. Norbert College

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