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President's Safety Update to the Community

Over the next few weeks, our campuses will be full of activity, with new and returning students about to embark on their academic year. It is an exciting time for the York community to celebrate all that this great institution has to offer. As we enjoy the moment and the many opportunities that the fall term brings, we should also be mindful of how important the sense of safety is to our community and the role each of us can play.

In keeping with my commitment in my fall message last year, I will be providing the York community with regular safety updates.

As a community, we seek ways to continue to improve ourselves and strive to enrich the experience we all have on our campuses. Over the last few months, we have been reviewing and implementing a number of new safety measures and initiatives as recommended in the comprehensive Safety Audit prepared by METRAC (Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children).

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you highlights of the key initiatives that we will be rolling out over the upcoming months. Collectively, these initiatives reflect a holistic approach to campus safety.

1. York Security Service Delivery Model

Responding to recommendations in the METRAC Safety Audit, the University will be modifying the service delivery model for York Security Services (YSS) personnel. They will also be equipped with additional personal protective equipment, which will include handcuffs and collapsible batons. These changes and additional equipment will allow YSS staff to carry out their role and responsibilities more effectively. All YSS staff will receive comprehensive training to support this enhanced function, including training in the proper use of force, the Criminal Code and other related areas. Given the level of training necessary, and the time required to effectively and appropriately communicate to the community, these changes will be implemented during the first half of 2012. I will provide you with more details in future safety updates.



2. York Security Services Personnel Increases

Ten new Security Officials and two new Security Supervisor positions have been approved and are now in the process of being hired. This represents an increase of approximately 30 per cent in staffing levels.

3. Campus Shuttle Services

The Campus Shuttle service is expanding its routes into The Village, a community of privately owned houses immediately south of campus. This expanded service will commence with the start of classes in September.

4. Inclusivity Training

The University has approved the development of an online tutorial known as "RIAT" – the Respect Inclusivity Awareness Tutorial. Complementing existing workshops currently offered through the Centre for Human Rights, the goal of RIAT is to provide an accessible tool to help participants gain an understanding of how respect and inclusion help form the basis of York's values as a community. The tutorial is scheduled to be available online to all members of the community beginning September 2012.

These measures are in addition to the many other initiatives that we have already implemented. For example:

- Two committees have been created, the Management Safety Committee, comprised of senior administrators, which oversees the implementation of the safety audit's recommendations, and the Community Safety Council, which acts as the forum through which students, faculty and staff alike help to create a true culture of safety at York. Additionally, as part of the CSC, a Safety Audit Standing Committee was created.
- A Sexual Assault Initiatives Committee was established to bring together key groups offering services to victims and to coordinate victim support.
- In March 2011, we officially reconstituted The Village at York Town & Gown Committee, which brings together representatives from York, City agencies and local residents to collaborate on activities to enhance community safety.
- Our residences are now better served through the establishment of the Residence Watch Officer Program, which now has 22 staff focusing on access control and residence security.
- We continue to bolster our surveillance abilities across campus:
 - We upgraded the blue light emergency phones.
 - York now has over 220 emergency phones on campus.
 - Our exterior "blue" phones now comply with international standards.

- Safety phones have been installed in classrooms with direct lines to the Security Control Centre.
- All residences are now equipped with door alarms and CCTV cameras.
- York has over 600 CCTV cameras located across campus.
- Some 25 prominently located LCD screens were installed around the Keele campus in October 2009, with the ability to communicate safety and security messages.
 - All new buildings on campus will have LCD screens incorporated into their plans.
 - A program is now in place to add the screens into all our residences.
 - In addition, a review of York's emergency messaging system is underway, including its mass notification systems.
- York is committed to improved lighting on campus. Last year alone, we spent some \$200,000 improving lighting in key areas and have projected a similar investment in each of the next three years.

Safety on our campuses requires a committed and informed community, and I believe that by continuing to work together, we will make a difference. I encourage you to visit York's [Safety Awareness](#) website for more information on the safety resources that our University has to offer. To view our detailed action plan on METRAC's recommendations, please visit the [Safety Audit](#) website.

Sincerely,



Mamdouh Shoukri
President and Vice-Chancellor