

Chancellor's message regarding UW-Eau Claire emergency preparedness

April 15, 2008, e-mail message from Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich to UW-Eau Claire students, faculty and staff

This week our campus community will recognize the first anniversary of the Virginia Tech shootings by remembering the students and faculty members who lost their lives that day. At 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, April 16, the campus carillon chimes will toll 32 times, once for each of the victims.

The Virginia Tech shootings and the subsequent shootings at Northern Illinois University are powerful reminders that every campus must be prepared to handle emergencies of any kind. Among the lessons learned from these tragedies is the importance of quickly communicating, in multiple ways, with our campus community.

With that in mind, we have implemented an emergency notification system that will enable us to alert you in the following ways:

- A pop-up message that will appear on all university-owned computers, including those in offices, labs and classrooms.
- E-mail to all students, faculty and staff.
- A unique ringtone and accompanying text message sent to all campus voice-over-Internet protocol (VoIP) telephones.
- Announcements posted on the UW-Eau Claire home page.

In addition, a **cell phone notification system** is now available to all members of the campus community. This system sends a brief text message with information about an emergency. **I am urging all students, faculty and staff to subscribe to the cell phone notification system.**

Subscribing is simple, quick and free. Information about how to subscribe can be accessed from the university's enhanced [emergency information Web site](#), which now has a link in the left column of the UW-Eau Claire home page.

Only law enforcement officials and select members of my staff will be authorized to activate the system to send the alerts in an emergency. No one else will have access to the system or the phone numbers you register when you subscribe.

There may be a nominal charge (5-15 cents) for receiving an emergency text message, depending on your telecom provider and contract. The cost will be minimal since the service will only be used for emergencies or to test the emergency notification system.

We have been testing all of these emergency notification methods on a limited basis and are now ready to do a **campuswide test to evaluate their overall effectiveness. That test will take place in early May. Details will be shared with you prior to the test.**

No one tool or communication strategy can guarantee that we will reach every member of our campus community under every set of circumstances. We will use multiple tools and strategies to maximize the number of people we do reach in a timely manner in a crisis situation. **You help the effort by subscribing to the cell phone notification system.**

The crisis communication plan — while extremely important — is just one part of our emergency planning and preparedness efforts.

While it is impossible to plan for every possible scenario, we have and will continue to review and revise our emergency procedures to ensure that we are prepared should tragedy of any kind strike our campus. Those people and agencies involved in our planning efforts have ranged from University Police and safety officials to regional emergency response authorities to UW System administrators.

Emergency preparedness planning efforts and actions have included:

- A tabletop exercise to test the effectiveness of our existing Emergency Contingency Plan and identify appropriate changes to the plan.
- A University Police and Eau Claire Police Department crisis negotiation and tactical response team training exercise on campus.
- UW-Eau Claire participation in the UW System president's 2007 Commission on University Security and the Governor's Task Force on Campus Safety.
- Formalizing the university's process for identifying people who might be at risk and improving strategies for communicating information about resources that are available to address the needs of those individuals.
- Reviewing internal University Police emergency response protocols.
- Reviewing mutual assistance protocols with the city of Eau Claire's police and fire departments.

We also recognize that educating the campus community about emergency procedures is an important part of preparing for a crisis. Toward that end, I encourage you to review our campus [Emergency Procedures Web page](#), which is included on the emergency information Web site.

While we hope to never have to use any of the procedures outlined here, they are necessary. You can do your part by subscribing to the cell phone notification system and reviewing our emergency procedures.

Also, please join me in keeping the Virginia Tech victims and their loved ones in your thoughts during what will be a difficult week for all those connected to that tragedy.

Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich