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MC Alert Discrepancies

By Freya Dahlgren, Junior Associate Editor

MC Alert, as referred to by official documents, is “Meredith’s emergency notification system for students, faculty and staff.” Its purpose is to alert the Meredith Community of emergency events in compliance with the Clery Act. MC Alert is a service that a Meredith Community member must opt into in order to reap its benefits.

On Feb. 5, 2023 at 1:22 p.m. an MC Alert was sent out notifying the Meredith community of “an armed man [that was] spotted on the greenway near campus heading toward Gorman Street.” Those receiving the message were advised to “shelter in place and stay calm.” Those enrolled in MC Alerts received an all-clear message at 1:39 p.m., shortly following the initial notification.

When asked about the decision to use MC Alert in this instance, Ann Gleason, Dean of Students, told *The Herald*, “Meredith College sends MC Alert campus emergency notifications when there is an on-campus emergency that poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of the campus community. Decisions to send MC Alert notifications in regard to safety concerns are guided by Campus Police.”

Dean Gleason also stated that the Raleigh Police Department (RPD) reached out to Campus Police about a call from a “concerned individual on the Greenway” who claimed they saw a “suspicious person.” Though no threats were identified on campus, Dean Gleason

said that “Campus Police advised sending an MC Alert message out of an abundance of caution” she said.

Chief Al White, the Meredith Campus Police Chief (MCPD), also discussed the alert being sent out, noting that he bases the decision to put out an MC Alert on the safety of the campus and is “guided by the Department of Education Clery Act guidelines.” The Clery Act guidelines for Meredith College can be found in the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

The Herald also asked Dean Gleason why MC Alert was not used when abortion protestors trespassed onto campus on Oct. 13, 2022. Dean Gleason reiterated that “decisions to send MC Alert notifications in regard to safety concerns are guided by Campus Police” and that “the incident in the fall was not identified as posing an immediate threat to the campus community so [it] did not prompt an MC Alert notification.”

Chief White was not present on campus during the abortion protests. Assistant Chief Mark Utley was on campus during the event but was unable to comment at the time of publication.

One observation made by multiple students, faculty and staff is that some individuals received notifications of the armed man on the greenway while some did not. Among those who received messages, some received notifications from multiple sources and phone numbers. When asked about why

some received the messages and some did not, Dean Gleason said, “The [initial] message was directed to all recipients (those registered to receive MC Alert notifications). If an individual did not receive the initial notification via text message, this may mean that the individual’s device may not have been able to receive SMS or text messages at that time, or that they were not registered to receive SMS emergency alerts.”

Dean Gleason added that sending messages through multiple channels, such as text messages and phone calls, “is a function of the system used to distribute MC Alert messages. When text message notifications are sent out via MC Alert, the messages do not always come from the same text message number. The All Clear message was sent via SMS and voice-mail.”

Some upcoming improvements to the system can be expected soon, too, according to Dean Gleason, who mentioned that “in the future, the College intends to include ‘MC Alert’ before each text message so that recipients will know that messages are coming from Meredith College, and will be sent as SMS and voice messages as long as this function does not delay the distribution of the emergency alert.” The Executive Leadership Team also announced in an email on Feb. 17 that they



In light of recent events on and around campus, it has called to light questions about discrepancies in Meredith’s MC Alert system (Photo by Kayla Dunn)

have “reviewed [their] protocols and trained additional personnel on the MC Alert system,” which was referenced in light of recent violence across college campuses.

In order for students to stay most informed, Dean Gleason recommended that all students, faculty, and staff register to receive MC Alert notifications and suggested that those who have been registered to MC Alert regularly review their contact information to ensure it is up to date. In addition, Dean Gleason noted that “campus community members are encouraged to review campus emergency procedures to be prepared in the event of a campus emergency.”

To sign up for MC Alerts, visit the Self-Service website and select MC Alert under the Miscellaneous tab.

New Positions On Campus

By Sarah Eike, Contributing Writer

There are a few faculty positions open across Meredith’s campus that multiple departments are seeking to be filled. According to the Meredith College website, the departments of Art, Theatre, Biological Sciences, Human Environmental Sciences, and Nutrition are all looking to hire full-time assistant professors to begin Aug. 1. These positions require proficiency in their field of work and teaching experience.

Dr. Laura Fine, the head of the English Department, gave *The Herald* insight into the English Department’s hiring process. She informed us that the English department is hiring for a postcolonial and world literature position,

and, so far, three candidates have been invited to continue in the interviewing process. After the initial interviews, starting late February and continuing into March, more extensive interviews will take place. This is when students will be invited to participate in the process. Dr. Fine said, “the candidates will each give teaching demonstrations to which students will be invited to attend and to fill out feedback forms that the search committee and English dept. faculty will consider in making their final decision.”

Dr. Fine explained that in addition to new positions, the English department is looking to make changes to the major by “adding literature by underrepre-

sented groups’ requirements and also developing new courses for our English major and wider general education populations of students.” Courses such as Banned Books, BIPOC Women Activists in Lit, Supernatural Lit, Jane Austen and a topics course in Disability in Literature are all new courses designed to “open up more possibilities for diversity and inclusivity in our literature offerings.”

The Department of Academic Programs is seeking a candidate to fulfill the role of Dean of the School of Education, Health and Human Sciences (EHHS). According to the website, this position is preferred to

begin Summer 2023, and the candidate “must have a earned doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D) in a field of one of the disciplines in EHHS.” Other various qualifications listed include “demonstrated commitment of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion; and familiarity with specialized accreditation requirements and processes.” The application deadline was Nov. 14, 2022, but, as the website states, “the search remains open until the position is filled.”

Students in classes in these departments should look for emails in the coming months to participate in teaching demonstrations and other parts of the interview process. In teaching demonstrations and other parts of the interview process.