

The Banner

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New security device able to 'track' students

By Amanda Thorn
Staff Writer

The university has invested \$150,000 in a new security system featuring a personal security device that will alert public safety officers to the owner's whereabouts on campus with the push of a button.

"When you are in danger, you squeeze the device and there is a system of sensors throughout campus that flashes your information on a computer screen in the Public Safety dispatching office, and then they can dispatch an officer," said Eric Iovacchini, vice chancellor of student affairs.



Dennis Gregory
Acting Director of Public Safety

The personal security device is made to fit on a key chain or be carried by hand, and contains two yellow buttons on either side of it. When the buttons are pressed simultaneously, Public Safety will be alerted that someone is in danger, said Dennis Gregory, acting director of public safety.

"There will be transponders placed throughout campus to cover the entire campus area. It will take 100 or more to make sure we have total coverage," Gregory said. The transponders will be placed on each building on campus, and are equipped with lights that turn on when the buttons are pressed so that the system can be tested.

Once the victim presses the buttons on the security device, the transponders send a signal to Public Safety, Gregory said.

"The transponders send a signal to us telling us that your personal security alarm has been activated. A computer screen shows your data. It tells us where you live, what kind of car you drive, any medical problems you have and any other information you want to share with us. It can also pull up a picture," Gregory said.

The computer screen will also show a map of the campus, and can track the victim's location at all times, Gregory said.

"I like the part that it can be used anywhere on campus, including dorm rooms. If you have a medical problem or someone is kicking in your door, you don't have to get up and dial 911. Just press the security alarm," Gregory said.

"I think it's a really good idea, not just for protection, but for an added sense of security and comfort. UNCA doesn't have a lot of crime, but it would be nice to be safe if a problem does arise," said Carrie Enders, a junior mass communication major.

"I believe that we have a very safe campus. However, having a safe campus does not negate the need for some type of emergency system. I believe it is better to have precautions in place in case of an emergency, instead of not having them for lack of prior need," said Derek Edwards, junior biology major.

The mobility allowed by the personal security device stands as a major plus, according to Gregory and Iovacchini.

The personal security device does not require the victim to stay stationary, unlike some pull-box systems, Gregory said.

"Some pull boxes that have the light that flashes require you to wait there because it is only known that a pull box has been activated," Gregory said.

This system allows public safety to know that a device has been activated, and they can actually track the victim and see where they are on campus, Gregory said.

"If you are being stalked or followed, then you don't have to stay in one place," Gregory said.

Iovacchini rates the new security device higher than pull boxes for similar reasons.

"To me, it seems better than a phone because you have to go to a phone (to use it), and with this system you can stay mobile," Iovacchini said.

"(Having to press) both sides simultaneously for it to be activated eliminates any accidents of alerting the system. I like that part of it," Gregory said.

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE CHASE-JENNINGS

UNC President Molly Broad speaks with Chancellor Patsy Reed during a visit to UNCA on Nov. 11. Broad, elected by the UNC Board of Governors last April, plans to visit all 16 UNC campuses during her first year in office.

UNC president addresses student concerns, issues

By Nancy Hayes
Staff Writer

The problem of campus binge drinking and the question of what to do about it stood at the top of the issues addressed by UNC President Molly Broad in a meeting with UNCA student leaders last week.

"We are in a very challenging time because the incidences of alcohol consumption are frequently associated with property damage or personal injury, whether it is roughing or rape," said Broad.

Broad met with representatives of the student body in Ramsey Library during a visit to the university on Nov. 11. Broad, who took office in July, visited UNCA as part of her plan to make in-depth visits to all 16 UNC campuses during her first year in office, said Joni Worthington of the UNC General Administration's office of public relations.

Broad referred to the recent incident at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(MIT) in which a student died from binge drinking. She said the death had substantially changed the bonds of trust between students and faculty.

"The mutual trust and support that you provide to one another is very important. This sense of community is tied to trust and mutual respect, and (binge drinking) incidences break those bonds of trust," said Broad.

University leaders and student judicial systems face a difficult task, according to Broad. "They must make a very important effort to try and balance the protection of members of the community with the rights of the accused until the wheels of justice have a chance to turn. Sometimes they turn very slowly," said Broad.

University leaders do not have an understanding of the causes of binge drinking, according to Broad.

"There's a lot of speculation about generation Y," Broad said. "We have examples of hazing incidents in fraternities and other

behaviors we can describe, but we don't understand the causal relationship there yet.

"There are some efforts to get a handle on it and understand it. The question is, if you don't understand what the basic causes are, what can you do to reduce the likelihood that students will find themselves in these circumstances?" said Broad.

Broad said one of the difficult issues is the request of some newspapers to gain access to student judicial proceedings that are now closed by federal law. Many believe students would not step forward to inform the university that some other student had harmed them if the proceedings were open.

"The bottom line is that the problems are serious enough and frequent enough that it leads institutions to provide more clarity, more rules of conduct of behavior, and sanctions for those who don't meet those standards of behavior," said Broad.

Broad asked student Community Service

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University names assistant director of Cambridge Fellows summer program

By Catharine Sutherland
News Editor

The university announced the new assistant director of the Cambridge Fellows Travel and Study Program last week, naming David Peifer, assistant professor of mathematics, to fill the position.

"I'm excited about this. It's going to be fun," said Peifer of the two-year term.

A new assistant director is selected from faculty applicants each year, and serves as the director of the program the following year. Peifer replaces Gwen Ashburn, associate professor of literature, who is now director of the 1997-98 program.

Peifer will teach the Humanities

224 course offered during the three-week travel and study abroad summer program in England, and especially looks forward to emphasizing science in the humanities curriculum at the Cambridge site.

Scientist Isaac Newton once held an honorary chair at Cambridge University, a position now held by Stephen Hawking, a leading physicist and cosmologist, according to Peifer.

He hopes to take students to a lecture by Hawking during the group's stay at Lucy Cavendish College, one of 32 Cambridge University campuses, next summer.

The Cambridge Experience, sponsored by the UNCA Teaching Fellows Program, is designed specifically as a Teaching Fellows junior enrichment opportunity, but is open to non-Teaching Fellows as

well, said Brenda Hopper, Teaching Fellows director.

Involving other students "makes (the program) better" because of the mixture it provides, Hopper said.

"I think this is what liberal arts is all about," Hopper said. The program has space for 24 students.

Students interested in participating in the 1997-98 Cambridge Experience should attend an informational meeting Nov. 24, 8-9 a.m. in the Laurel Forum.

Teaching Fellows must participate in one of the summer activities sponsored by a North Carolina university between their sophomore and junior years.

UNCA sponsors the Cambridge Experience.

Teaching Fellows are students who are awarded \$20,000 for four years

of study in a North Carolina university in return for four years of teaching in a state public school following their graduation.

Approximately 400 high school seniors receive Teaching Fellows scholarships each year, and 94 Teaching Fellows currently attend UNCA.

While UNCA Teaching Fellows can choose from over 30 different summer programs, including trips to France, Italy, and Greece, many choose the Cambridge program for its credit hours and opportunity for independent travel.

UNCA's Cambridge Experience remains the only Teaching Fellows program to offer course credit, according to Hopper.

Students can earn seven hours of

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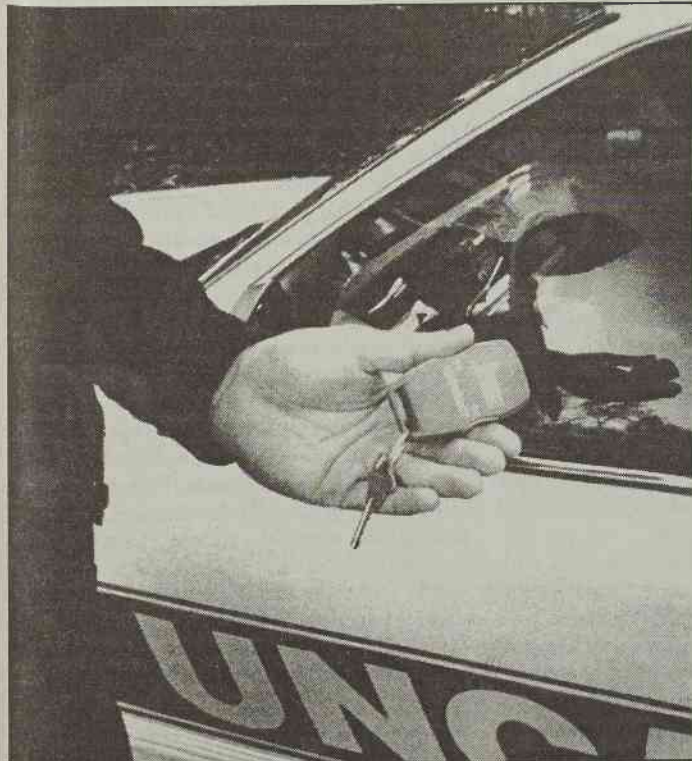


PHOTO BY SARAH HARNDEN

UNCA students and employees may soon be carrying personal security devices that enable them to alert Public Safety officers of their location at the push of a button.