

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Point/Counterpoint: *Is the WSSU campus safe?*

WSSU relatively safe campus

By Larry Williams
STAFF REPORTER

Safety on any major college campus is a top priority. Parents and students alike want to know that they are in a safe environment.

Winston-Salem State police have full arrest capabilities, just like a Winston-Salem police officer. Police patrolling campus is a regular occurrence. There are emergency towers throughout campus wherein students can push a button and get immediate help.

Granted, a commuter student may have a different perspective than a student who lives on campus, since a commuter's time on campus is usually limited to going to and from class.

At WSSU, there haven't been too many reports of major incidents taking place on campus. Recently, there were reports of a robbery attempt of a student outside of the library. That's not to say that one robbery – or in this case an attempted robbery – isn't important, because robbery is a serious crime. The campus police should review their rotations in that particular area and make the necessary adjustments.

WSSU's campus is safe, though "safe" is a relative term. People should feel as safe on campus as they do when walking through the shopping mall, a park or their own neighborhood.

However, as an extra precaution, students should make sure to walk in groups as much as possible and pay attention to their surroundings when on campus.

Taking those steps would ensure that students are doing their part to make WSSU a safe campus.

A crime can occur at any moment, anywhere. A student, faculty member or administrator should only expect that police officials are doing the best they can; are staying ahead of the curve by constantly reviewing policies and procedures; and that when a situation arises that they handle it swiftly and appropriately.

In the end, that's all one can reasonably expect on a public campus with no doors or gates

Larry Williams is a senior mass communications major.

WSSU coeds gripped by fear

Temple Jolly
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Paralyzing fear has gripped many Winston-Salem State University coeds. Since two students said they were robbed during the 2007 fall semester, campus safety has been on the minds of many campus-bound students – especially women. And female students have had to grasp the reality of how dangerous it could be walking alone around campus at night. After the robberies, some female students recalled incidents that happened to them; others expressed their fear.

Sherry (not her real name) said she was sexually solicited by a man at the intersection near the campus main entrance while on her way to her dormitory. She hurriedly returned to O'Kelly Library where she telephoned friends to accompany her to her room at Rams Commons.

Carla (also not her real name) described a similar incident while she was leaving the F.L. Atkins nursing building. She hurried to the nearest emergency tower to summon campus police for an escort to her car, which was parked several yards away near C.E. Gaines gymnasium. She got no response. Finally, she, too, had to call upon friends for an escort.

Other female students have complained that emergency towers were either malfunctioning or that there was no response when they attempted to summon campus police.

According to the Sept. 4, 2007, issue of The News Argus, the Virginia Tech massacre last spring prompted WSSU officials to reassess its "campus safety policies." However, the revamped policies only emphasized increased safety measures against incidents similar to the shooting at Virginia Tech, and failed to address the concerns students face on a daily basis.

Until campus policies address broader safety concerns, women will have to increase precautionary measures to secure their own safety.

Planning ahead, staying alert, pairing up, keeping a friend on the phone until a destination is reached, and reporting incidents are a few campus safety alternatives, for now.

Temple Jolly is a junior mass communications major.



SURVEY SAYS: Hazing still popular on college campuses

Erica Perez
MCT WIRE SERVICE

MILWAUKEE

More than half of college students in campus organizations have experienced hazing despite the fact that the practice is banned practically everywhere, a new national survey has found.

The study, released this week, didn't limit its focus to the usual suspects – fraternities, sororities and varsity sports teams. Those are still the biggest offenders, with nearly three-quarters of members reporting hazing. But the study also found hazing in club sports (64 percent), performing arts organizations (56 percent) and even academic clubs (28 percent).

Types of hazing activities ranged from benign to extreme. The four most common were drinking games, singing or chanting in public, associating with specific people and not others, and drinking large amounts of alcohol to the point of passing out.

Milwaukee-area students interviewed recently said that by the researchers' definition, they'd been hazed, but in a way they thought was positive.

Marquette University law student Mike Menghini said that as an undergraduate at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, he was awakened by fellow members of the tennis team for midnight practice, which the study described as hazing.

"I would say it's just part of the camaraderie," he said. "It wasn't something I was forced to do. ... It was just a team thing."

The Marquette men's soccer team makes each new freshman sing a cappella on the bus while everyone cheers or boos, said Daniel Addis, a junior on the team.

"It's pretty embarrassing," Addis said. "It's fun. It's just joking."

Researchers Elizabeth Allan and Mary Madden of the University of Maine's College of Education and Human Development surveyed some 11,000 students

at 53 college campuses in 2007. An online survey asked students to indicate what kind of campus organizations they were involved in and then asked whether they had participated in 30 activities that the researchers defined as hazing.

"Hazing is more widespread than I think most people would have assumed," said Allan, the study's principal investigator. "Most people typically associate it with Greek organizations ... and more recently with athletics ... but I don't think people think of other types of student organizations and clubs."

The study defines hazing as "any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers them regardless of a person's willingness to participate."

In an interesting wrinkle, the study also found that nine out of 10 students who report experiencing a hazing behavior in college do not

consider themselves hazed. More students perceive positive rather than negative results from hazing. Some 31 percent of the time, students said they felt more a part of the group because of hazing, while hazing made them feel stressed 11 percent of the time, for example.

Allan said her interviews with roughly 300 students helped explain why many students don't think there's a problem. For many students, hazing implies the use of physical force or causes real physical harm.

"Many students don't take into account the power of coercion," she said.

Even if students don't perceive certain hazing activities as problematic, she said, peer pressure to participate in seemingly harmless hazing behaviors can lead to more hazardous activities.

"It sets up this power dynamic that there are those who are in and those who are out," Allan said. "That can create a slippery slope."

Nearly half of the students

reported experiencing at least one hazing behavior while in high school.

Wisconsin-Madison senior Laura Voith said she participated in "positive" hazing when she was a student at Shorewood High School.

The school had an event at which upperclassmen would dress younger students in potentially embarrassing clothing, such as Halloween costumes or mismatched outfits.

"From my experience, it was in good fun," Voith said. Now captain of the university's women's club volleyball team, she said the team plays drinking games but she never forces students to play.

"If they don't want to drink, I don't drink so they have someone to hang out with," Voith said.

"I would say it's just part of the camaraderie. It wasn't something I was forced to do. ... It was just a team thing."

Editorial Policy

The News Argus is a student publication of Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, N.C.

The views and opinions expressed on the

Opinion page are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Argus staff or of the faculty, staff, students, or administration of the university.

We welcome letters to the editor and opinion columns. Letters and columns should not exceed 400 words in

length. E-mail your columns and letters to newzargus@yahoo.com. Or, deliver them in person on a CD or DVD at Carolina Hall, Room G005. E-mailed submissions should be sent in MSWord format.

With each article or letter, please include your name, major or department, classification,

e-mail address and phone number so we may contact you for verification and confirmation.

The News Argus editors reserve the right to edit letters and opinion columns for length, grammar, clarity, profanity and style, but not for ideas. Anonymous letters will not be printed.

The News Argus

The Student Newspaper of Winston-Salem State University

Editor-in-Chief
Steven J. Gaither

Managing Editor
Sharrod Patterson

News Editor
Stephanie Douthit

Advertising Manager
Tecarra Sutton

Photo Editor
Grant Fulton

Online Editor
James Cherry

Staff Writers

Shadonna Boyd
Terri Day

Trygeania Dowell
Charlene Wheeler

Jerrod Johnson

Larry Williams

* The News Argus is a weekly newspaper for the students, faculty and staff of WSSU.

* Opinions expressed in The News Argus are not necessarily those of the faculty, staff or administration at WSSU.

* For advertising information e-mail newzargus@yahoo.com or call 336-750-2327

www.thenewsargus.com