

Editorial: Is Meredith as safe as students think?

by Shannon Smith

Editorial: Are Student Development and campus Security Contradiction Each Other?

In the mind of each in-coming freshman is the transition from a safe secure home to the wide world of Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina. With this new environment comes the concern of personal safety. How safe is really in Raleigh? How safe is the Meredith campus? How can I protect myself in my new environment and who is looking out for me? These are the questions in the of many students. Sure a logical answer for many of these questions is campus security, but is security really doing its job?

I work at Crabtree Valley Mall on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. This week, I was asked to work on Tuesday. Trying to be nice, I agreed, not thinking that I would have to walk all the back to Stringfield from the freshman "horse lot" alone at 10:00 at night. When I returned from work, I stopped at the gate house and called security for an escort back to the dorm. After riding with them several times before, I thought noting of asking them

for a ride this time. When I drove around to the parking lot, I was met by two older women in a full size security car. I approached the back door of the car and as I opened it, much to my surprise, I was told that "by orders from the chief," I could no longer ride in the car with them. I was completely stunned as images of being attacked on my walk across the field entered my mind! Instead of just letting me ride with them, they proceeded to drive in the grass, following me all the way to my dorm, making me look like a criminal being followed by the police! I understand that liability is in question, but this is ridiculous! We were both going the same direction and we are all women. If they want to see liability, let one of them run over me while they are following me!

Another issue to be discussed is an incident that occurred on the first floor of Stringfield. At 1:00 in the morning, a man opened the door that connects Stringfield to Belk Dining Hall from the outside to let two of my friends leave. Thinking that the man was legitimate campus personnel, they didn't notice that after they left, the man went in

after them! First of all, what was this man doing unaccompanied on the campus to begin with? Second, how did this man, who had no cam card and no keys, open a door that was supposed to be locked at 7:00 that evening? The man proceeded to wander around the first floor of Stringfield and speak to a girl who in shock of the whole situation, was standing in a t-shirt and underwear! The girl quickly ran to her room and called the resident assistant, who in turn called security. Security responded, but by the time they arrived, the man had already fled the area and was seen leaving the campus by security guards. If security is taking identification at the gate house, patrolling the campus 24 hours a day, and locking outside entrances to the college as stated in the "Bible" of Meredith College, the handbook, then an incident like this would never have happened. While I understand that there will always be flaws in any security system, this is no ordinary "slip up."

On Monday, September 19, a TRANSPORTATION, sponsored by the campus division of Student Development, was held for freshman on Increasing Your

Safety Factor, in which a guest speaker, Ms. Pam Butler, a Crime Prevention Specialist with the North Carolina Division of Crime Prevention, addressed the audience. She told graphic stories of rape, murder and attacks on women in the Raleigh and Chapel Hill area, also stating that Raleigh has one of the highest crime rates for rape and murder in the country! If safety is such an issue, shouldn't security be taking more drastic measures than having only nine male and three female security guards, of which only about two are armed? When I talked to Chief Dan Shattuck, head of security, he had not been informed that anything had happened in Stringfield, he simply stated, "that's news to me!" Is it just me, or is there a definite lack of communication going on here? Communication must be increased between departments and especially within them. I asked him if there had been many problems with cam card access to the doors, he simply said, "very few." I know for a fact

see EDITORIAL page eleven

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