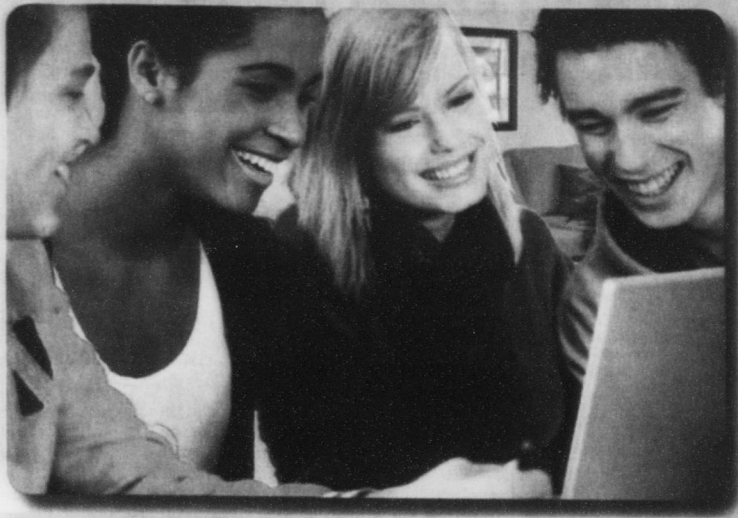


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University aims to keep students safe, up to date

BY ZACK LEVINE
STAFF WRITER

With bigger freshman classes entering UNC every year, the Department of Public Safety has a growing responsibility to watch out for students' safety.

Alert sirens are the DPS's most recent effort to keep students safe on campus, said Randy Young, DPS spokesman.

The system activates if students' immediate security is in jeopardy, such as if there is an armed or dangerous person on campus, a gas leak or a severe weather warning.

The sirens' first trial run was Dec. 19, and officials plan to do another test soon, Young said.

Students who are outside and within a half of a mile away from a siren will be able to hear it.

Some locations of the sirens include Hinton James Residence Hall, Winston Residence Hall and on Airport Road off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

But alert sirens are not the only way to provide safety to students.

Young said University police have a K-9 unit which includes an officer and a dog trained to detect explo-

sives. Officers also cycle around campus to provide security to areas inaccessible to patrol cars.

UNC Mobile's Rave Guardian program, which became available in fall 2007, is another safety measure available to students.

In addition to sending out mass text messages, it allows students to contact the DPS dispatch office from their cell phones if they are walking alone to ensure that they arrive at their destinations safely, Young said.

UNC's Department of Housing and Residential Education also is doing its part to keep students safe — on the inside.

Resident advisors are 24-hour resources to students while they are in their rooms, said Rick Bradley, assistant director of information and communications for the housing department.

And at least once a semester, there are safety awareness programs to inform students of the ways they can stay safe, he added.

But Bradley said students need to remember they are not immune to danger.

"I think there is a false sense of

security in students," Bradley said. "They think that by living on a college campus, the only other people here are students like them."

And Young said other safety options, such as the P2P, also have helped to keep people safe.

Pressing the red button at one of the nine-foot-tall emergency call boxes, or blue lights, immediately alerts University police that a student is in need of assistance.

Young added that while there are a number of safety measures in place to protect students, they still should take precaution.

"Most importantly, students should notify us if they see anything suspicious," Young said. "Even if it is not currently affecting you, it may help us prevent a problem in the future."

And students said they feel that they live and work in a safe environment at UNC.

"I've never felt threatened on campus," junior Rachel Rand said. "I think UNC does a good job of keeping its students safe."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Local police look to build ties

BY MAX ROSE
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

When students move into old neighborhoods, sometimes issues arise between longtime residents and newcomers.

So those who choose to move off campus are asked to be good neighbors, Chapel Hill police spokesman Lt. Kevin Gunter said.

But sometimes students find themselves in violation of town nuisance laws, which restrict loud parties at inconvenient hours, Gunter said.

"Sometimes ... they're not thinking in terms of building relationships," he said. "Their neighbor might be someone who needs to get up every morning to go to work."

In 2007, Chapel Hill police received 67 loud noise complaints, most of them concentrated in the downtown area, Gunter said.

But Gunter said a partnership between the town and University is trying to improve the relationship.

The Good Neighbor Initiative, which Gunter said will kick off its fourth year this summer, encourages off-campus students to meet their neighbors and create a safe environment in which to live.

"Hopefully we've been successful in raising their awareness in how to be a good neighbor," he said.

Last year, volunteers handed out 350 packets of information for the initiative.

Gunter said the program is continuing to grow and has shown some success.

"They reach out, and in some cases they've actually introduced themselves to their neighbors," he said. "We're hopefully impacting the old students as well as new students who are moving into those neighborhoods."

Members of the student government went into local neighborhoods to hand out fliers for the initiative, Student Body Vice President Mike Tarrant said.

"I think we believe it's critical to

have a positive relationship with the town in order to collaborate on issues," he said. "We've made an effort to collaborate on as many issues as possible."

After urging from the student government, the Chapel Hill Town Council last year approved blue lighting downtown, which Tarrant said has been proven to reduce crime.

"Those lights are positioned in areas where they would hopefully be accessible for students when they are coming to and from their homes," Gunter said.

Former Student Body President James Allred began the process to get the lights and appropriated \$80,000 toward the lighting and emergency call boxes.

This year student government is proposing a \$0.50 student fee increase for the budget for safety and security, some of which Tarrant said would go to off-campus projects.

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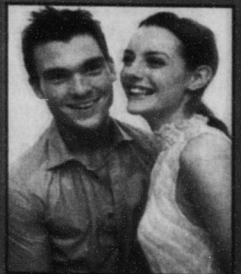
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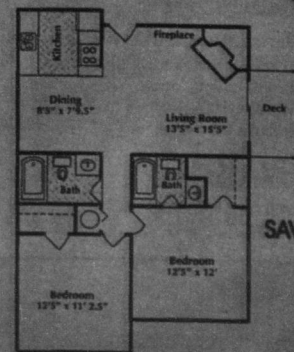
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