

# Campus Personal Safety Committee Report 2005-2006

## Committee Members

Joan Ballard, *Associate Professor of Psychology*  
Steve Benchik, *Associate Director of Facilities Services*  
Kerrie Bondi, *Career Counselor*  
Emily Day, *Student Association Director of Student Affairs*  
Lauren Doyle, *Residence Director*  
Lindsey Etringer, *Resident Assistant*  
Bradley Johnson, *Geneseo First Response*  
Dara Omer, *Student*  
Kristi Ruggiero, *Geneseo First Response*  
Joe VanRemmen, *University Police – Co-Chair*  
Jim Williams, *Chair and Associate Professor of History*  
Joan Zook, *Assistant Professor of Psychology – Co-Chair*

The committee was charged by President Dahl to:

1. Identify areas in public buildings that have public telephones, identify areas in need of additional phones, and recommend the specific verbiage on signs to be posted with the public phones.
2. Develop a plan for parking College vehicles on campus overnight that would minimize the potential for criminal mischief.
3. Evaluate the impact of the Letchworth Road construction project from the vantage point of campus personal safety.
4. Appoint an official liaison to the Geneseo First Response Board of Directors.
5. Assess the availability and accuracy of emergency evacuation maps posted in each classroom building.
6. Develop and disseminate statements concerning safe emergency egress from large-scale campus events.

## Charge #1 – Public Telephones

The committee walked through all of the academic buildings and assessed the number of public phones, the visibility of the phones, and the presence of emergency numbers posted nearby. Are findings and recommendations are as follows.

- Most buildings have just one public phone, which we believe is adequate, especially considering the proliferation of cell phone usage among students. However, many of the phones are not easy to find. For example, one phone in Brodie is in a student lounge and the one in Sturges is in an alcove. Neither is

immediately visible from the main hallway. We recommend putting up clear signs marking the locations of phones in all the buildings. Two-sided signs that are attached perpendicular to the wall would be ideal, as they can be seen from down the hallway. The current sign located near the phone in Bailey Hall would be a good model to follow in the other buildings.

- We recommend adding two new phones to Bailey Hall so that a phone is available on each floor. (Currently, there is just one phone located on the first floor.) The rationale for this recommendation is that the science labs in Bailey pose a greater safety risk than most academic buildings and the ability to get to a phone quickly may be critical for personal safety.
- Most phones did not have emergency numbers posted nearby and some just had a taped up piece of paper. We recommend posting permanent placards near all campus phones. The placard like the one currently posted near the Sturges phone would be a good model.

## Charge #2 – College Vehicles

The committee discussed the problem of college alternative vehicles

(Gem, Cushman, etc.) being vandalized on campus, with Steve Benchik of Facilities Services. The following corrective steps have been taken:

- Vehicles used in Academic areas are parked in the load zone between Welles and South Hall.
- Vehicles used in the lower area of campus now park in the Service Area or in the police parking between Schrader and Merritt.

The implementation has already taken place and damage to alternative vehicles has decreased from 5 to 2 over a similar time period last year.

## Charge #3 – Letchworth Road

The committee evaluated the impact of the Letchworth Road construction project on campus personal safety during our annual safety walk held on April 17, 2006. We found that the project improved safety in several significant ways.

- The new sidewalks eliminate the need for pedestrians to walk in the roadway and the addition of curbs more clearly defines and separates the areas designed for vehicles and for pedestrians.
- The curve in the road and the addition of a stop sign slows traffic in the area.
- Two new blue light phones were added and lighting is much improved.

## Charge #4 – Liaison to GFR Board of Directors

The committee appointed Kristi Ruggiero to be our liaison to the Geneseo First Response Board of Directors this year. She provided regular reports to the committee, keeping us informed of issues of concern to the Board.

## Charge #5 – Emergency Evacuation Maps

The committee assessed the emergency procedure signs posted at the entrances of all academic buildings. Fourteen signs were missing. Maintenance was notified of the locations of all missing signs. Currently most signs are paper and posted inside plastic sleeves. Because a large number of signs had either fallen off or were ripped down, we recommend that the replacement emergency evacuation signs be attached in a more permanent fashion (such as with a frame that is bolted to the wall).

## Charge #6 – Emergency Exit Statements

The committee discussed the issue of safety procedures for emergency egress during large-scale public events.

- We recommend that organizers make announcements pointing out the number and locations of all exits prior to all large-scale events. The statement could read similar to, “In the case of emergency, there are \_\_\_\_ exits to this building. They are located \_\_\_\_\_. We ask that you exit in an orderly manner.”
- Event organizers could be notified of the need to make this announcement when they book their venue through event scheduling. Whether scheduling on-line or by phone, anyone attempting to book a larger venue could be asked whether or not there will be college visitors present. An affirmative response could then prompt them of the need to make the emergency announcement prior to their event.

## Other Issues

In addition to working on the above charges, the committee conducted its annual safety walk on April 17, 2006. We also met with Chuck Reyes, the new director of Environmental Health and Safety during one of our regular meetings. The following are some recommendations that came out of these exercises:

The Route 63 Bypass remains a significant hazard for pedestrians. At least two students were struck by vehicles at this location in the last year. We recommend that the college explore options for improving safety at this crossing including the following: (1) adding flashing lights to the current crossing signs, (2) adding lights in the road itself on the crosswalk, (3) implementing a 15 mph speed limit through the area, (4) increasing patrols along this stretch of the road, and (5) taking over the highway from the state and re-routing traffic so that it does not go through campus.

- We recommend installing a blue light phone in the middle of T-Lot. The closest blue light visible to the eye from the lot is north of Nassau. The lot is a major walkway between the South residence halls and the gym and at least one student this year complained about the lack of a blue light phone in this area.
- We recommend installing a barrier around the gas pumps in K-Lot. These pumps are located in a parking lot and there is a danger of cars backing into them.
- We recommend looking into the possibility of constructing a sidewalk going from the south side of Schrader to the Union entrance. Currently, pedestrians are forced to walk all the way around to the north of Schrader but, because this is not a direct route, most pedestrians end up walking in the roadway.
- We recommend that next year's committee explore safety issues related to student after-hours access to buildings. Particularly in buildings such as Brodie, where students have access to hazardous materials such

as acids and saws, limiting access to those with proper safety instruction (perhaps through the use of swipe cards) may be warranted.

- We recommend that next year's committee explore safety issues for disabled people exiting buildings during emergencies. Because elevators automatically go down to the ground floor during emergencies, disabled individuals can become trapped on the upper floors. Particularly in the case of fire, individuals need to use areas of refuge (typically stairwells) to protect themselves from fire and smoke until the fire department arrives to evacuate them. Areas of refuge in each building should be evaluated. Because many individuals do not understand the purpose of these areas and inadvertently render them ineffective by propping open doors, etc., increased signage and education pointing out the location and purpose of these areas of refuge may be warranted.