



Savannah State University Community and Parents:

As we prepare for the Thanksgiving break and the final week of classes, I want to update you regarding the shooting incident that took place on campus on Friday, November 21, 2008. The campus was placed on immediate lock down for several hours while the Savannah State University Department of Public Safety, with the assistance of local and state law enforcement agencies, assessed the situation, questioned witnesses, and searched for the alleged student gunman, who was located and taken into custody without incident. He has been arrested and is currently being held by local authorities. In addition, I want to report to you that the injured student, who sustained two bullet wounds, is listed in good condition at a local hospital and is awaiting further medical procedures.

While we are pleased that this horrific situation did not end tragically, we are none the less disturbed by this senseless display of violence and the use of a weapon. The violence and firing of the handgun put our students and others at risk and caused serious disruption to the University's business of education. It seems that violence on many college campuses is becoming an all too familiar recurring theme. This is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at Savannah State University. To further ensure campus safety, we will add additional patrols, room checks and other measures as people are our number one priority.

Going forward let me restate Savannah State University's position regarding weapons. As indicated in the 2008-09 Student Handbook, the University has a 'zero tolerance' regulation on weapons and firearms of any kind. Violators will be permanently expelled from the University and will face arrest and certain criminal charges. Further, it is unacceptable to have knowledge of weapons and firearms and not report the same to the appropriate authorities.

Keeping silent only creates an environment that endangers all members of the University. While it may seem natural to want to protect a friend, the lack of disclosure may do more harm than good in the long run. Proactive measures typically outweigh the reactions that result when we fail to conduct ourselves responsibly. University members can confidentially report suspicious behaviors and questionable actions to the Department of Public Safety directly at (912) 356-2186, or the state hotline at (877) 516-3462 or via email at <https://www.tnwinc.com/ssu/>.

Further, as an added benefit and measure of safety, I highly recommend that students, faculty, and staff register for the University's emergency alert system, Connect-ED. This system, which can be accessed at <https://simba.savstate.edu/students/ssuAlert.htm>, provides immediate notice of emergency situations and information via telephone, text message, and e-mail, as was the case last week.

Finally, I wish to express our appreciation to the many individual students, faculty, staff, and administrators who acted in a timely and professional manner to bring closure to this unfortunate situation. We are also indebted to the many agencies, including the Thunderbolt, Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police, and Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the staff at St. Joseph's/Candler and Memorial University hospitals for assisting the injured student and others during this stressful time.

We look forward to returning to our various routines and a sense of normalcy. At Savannah State University, we are proud that we are known for the nurturing, family-like atmosphere that we intentionally create for the student body. Let us not forget what this means as we continue our business of learning and education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Earl G. Yarbrough, Sr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Earl G. Yarbrough, Sr., Ph.D.
President