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WMU Alert System

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WMU Alert system

Colleagues:

We're tremendously saddened by the senseless acts of violence that occurred Feb. 20 and join the wider Kalamazoo county community in its grief. I know that all of you join me in offering our condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of this tragedy.

In the aftermath of the terrible incidents, many have raised questions about why we did not issue a WMU Alert to inform our campus community about the unfolding tragedy. Frankly, as we review information now surfacing, I understand the concern and respect the input.

Our WMU Alert system is set up to comply with the Clery Act and, as such, warn members of the WMU community of the existence of a credible threat to our campus and the people on it. Saturday's events occurred in three different county communities over a period of hours. It was 11:30 p.m. before our public safety officials were told the shootings were linked. Our public safety chief was on his way to an inter-agency briefing when the suspect was taken into custody at 12:40 a.m.

Two of the three incidents happened miles from the campus, and while these incidents were not linked until very late in the timeline, we need to make adjustments in our own procedures to respond to extraordinary circumstances. Last night's incident clearly was one. We are looking carefully at our guidelines and the possibility of developing a public safety advisory covering a broader array of public safety issues. We're also exploring more effective ways to use social media.

Clearly, we failed last night to provide adequate information and updates. We look forward to working with our student leaders, faculty and the University community to be much more responsive to the need for information and communication. To that end, I have scheduled a universitywide forum for 7 p.m. Monday in the East Ballroom of the Bernhard Center to provide information, respond to questions and seek additional input.

This is a community committed to learning, and we will learn from this incident and improve our campus alert measures moving forward.

Dr. John M. Dunn

President