



BOSTON COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

September 2009

Dear Parents,

As we begin the new academic year, I write to update you on steps Boston College has undertaken to help ensure the safety and well being of your student on our campus.

Over the last two-and-a-half years, Boston College has launched a comprehensive emergency preparedness program, built capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from hazards, and worked to create among students, faculty and staff a campus-wide culture of preparedness.

Specifically, Boston College has created an experienced and professional Emergency Management Team comprising key staff members who meet regularly to assess risks and prepare for any emergency. The team includes representatives from BC Police, Emergency Management, Public Affairs, Residential Life, Student Affairs, Athletics and the President's Office, among others, to ensure that all areas and functions of the University are appropriately represented.

This Team has developed the Boston College Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to prepare the University to respond to a wide range of emergency situations. Recent additions include the development of an evacuation and shelter plan for classrooms and residence halls, as well as emergency management plans for Commencement, athletic events and severe weather. We have tested these plans through a variety of emergency exercises which include winter storms, pandemic influenza and major sporting events.

In addition, the University continues to test and refine its emergency notification system. The system has been successfully tested several times in the past year and used for two weather-related delays and cancellations during the winter. The most recent test was an overwhelming success with 20,000 emails and 16,000 text messages sent out and received within a matter of minutes by students, staff and faculty members of the BC community. We are continuing to evaluate new ways for communicating with the BC community in the event of an emergency through the use of social networking, and the possible implementation of a campus-wide public address system.

Over the summer, the Emergency Management Team has met to prepare for the coming flu season and to address concerns posed by the HINI virus. While all medical experts agree that this virus poses no more of a threat than the seasonal flu with which we deal each winter, we have taken necessary precautions to ensure that we are prepared to address the issue. In the meantime, we encourage all BC students to follow the recommendations of public health officials nationwide and BC's Director of Health Services Dr. Thomas Nary, which include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water or waterless hand sanitizers.
- Cover your nose/mouth with a tissue, sleeve or elbow when you cough or sneeze. Throw away used tissues.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol based hand gel.
- Regularly clean shared phone receivers, keyboards, remote controls, office equipment and door knobs.
- Refrain from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.
- Get plenty of sleep. avoid alcohol and smoking.
- Finally, if you think you are ill with the symptoms of influenza, avoid close contact with others as much as possible. Seek medical care. BC Health Services is available to assist ill students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Health Services at **617-552-3225**.

Moving forward, the University will continue to conduct safety, preparedness and health maintenance talks at orientation sessions, staff meetings and other venues to ensure the culture of preparedness. We strongly encourage your son or daughter to participate in these important discussions.

All of these initiatives supplement ongoing emergency preparedness programs that we have in place, including:

- An emergency preparedness website called BC/Prepared, which is the primary source of news and information in the event of an emergency. The site contains helpful information for parents and students to prepare for an emergency situation, as

well as safety tips and links to informative internal and external websites. We encourage you to review this site at <http://www.bc.edu/prepared/>.

- A Verizon 1-800 emergency number that parents can call to receive updated information in the event of an emergency. The number for the hotline, 1-888-BOS-COLL (1-888-267-2655).
- Ongoing monthly case meetings that include staff from BC Police, Residential Life, Academic Deans, Dean for Student Development, University Counseling and Health Services, who can confidentially evaluate cases of troubled students. Our Behavioral Evaluation Team has the authority to place students on a mandatory medical leave of absence if it is deemed in the best interest of the Boston College community.
- Extensive resources are available to all of our students at anytime. These services include:
 - Campus Ministry at 552-3475
 - Office of Student Affairs at 552-3280
 - Counseling Services at 552-3310
 - Health Services at 552-3225
 - BC Police at 552-4440

These initiatives will help to make the BC campus as safe as possible. However, there are a few simple steps that your son or daughter can take to help ensure his or her safety:

Be Alert: Be aware of what is going on around you and report any unusual activity to BC Police.

Be Informed: Know what hazards can occur in the area, know what you should do if they occur and where to go

Attend safety and security information sessions and classes

Know how to be notified in the event of an emergency.

Provide/update your contact information on the BC portal at <http://portal.bc.edu>.

Program a family member or close friend into your cell phone using ICE (In Case of Emergency) in the name field. Emergency responders could use this to contact someone you designate if you are incapacitated.

Be Prepared: Develop an emergency communications plan with family and friends.

Know where to get official information:

BC Prepared at (www.bc.edu/prepared) for emergency information.

Call 1-888-BOS-COLL (1-888-267-2655) for emergency information.

Learn first aid and CPR.

Develop a Disaster Kit, (details can be found at: www.bc.edu/prepared).

The safety, security and well being of our students, faculty, staff and visitors are our top priority. I welcome you to contact me or John Tommaney, Boston College Director of Emergency Management (john.tommaney@bc.edu) with any safety concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Keating
Executive Vice President