

MCC Campus Safety Brief

Several questions have arisen regarding the safety of the Monroe Community College campus in light of the recent tragedy that occurred at an Oregon state community college. Please be assured that the College operates with everyone's safety in mind and has established policies and procedures that are designed to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment.

As a campus community, we all have a responsibility to promote a safe environment. We encourage everyone to report any suspicious activity to Public Safety by dialing 2911 on an MCC phone (which will connect you to public safety) or by dialing 911 to reach law enforcement authorities. It is also important for all members of the Campus community to be fully engaged in identifying persons in crisis and reporting issues through appropriate channels as they become apparent.

To provide you with some background, and continue this important discussion, please consider the following.

Access to the MCC Campus:

- As a locally supported institution, our campus is an open campus, which allows community members access to campus during the College's operating hours in accordance with College rules and policies.
- To help protect all members of the College community, we have Peace Officers, trained and certified in accordance with New York State Department of Criminal Justice standards, who patrol the campus and address situations that may impact the safety of the campus.
- The College's [Public Safety department](#) also has a reciprocal relationship with the Brighton and City of Rochester police departments. Other law enforcement agencies may be called upon as well in appropriate circumstances.
- Anyone who is concerned about their safety while on campus can call Public Safety by dialing 2911 on an MCC phone (which will connect you to public safety) or by dialing 911 to reach law enforcement authorities. .

Students:

- The College is formed under the laws of New York State and, as a receiver of federal funds, is also subject to federal laws and regulations. These laws govern the manner in which we admit students and the treatment that they receive while attending classes at the College. For instance, we are subject to anti-discrimination laws, which mean that we cannot, and do not, discriminate against the admission to or treatment of students during

their educational program on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.

- Mental health conditions are considered a disability under the law, and the College must accommodate individuals with these disabilities unless they pose a direct threat to the community that cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- Status discrimination must be distinguished from behavior, however. To elaborate, it is unlawful to stereotype based upon an individual's disability condition; reacting to unsafe, threatening or suspicious behavior is not, however, unlawful. Thus, MCC has, and will continue to, react to behavior and conduct reported to the College to promote a safe campus environment.

Background Checks:

- Generally, most colleges and universities do not perform criminal background checks on students; however, each time that there is a tragedy on a college campus involving violence, the issue of criminal background checks for students is raised.
- While the College does not perform criminal background checks on our students, we are subject to SUNY policy that requires all applicants for admission to report whether they have been convicted of a felony or have been dismissed from an institution of higher education for disciplinary reasons.
- The applications of students who report that they have been convicted of a felony or have been dismissed from another institution are subject to review by a committee and that committee decides whether the student should be admitted to the College. The committee must consider whether the admission of the student would pose an unreasonable risk to property or would pose a risk to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the public. This review provides additional protections to the College community from applicants who have been convicted of crimes and allows for a more thorough vetting of students who fall within this category.

FERPA:

- When violence occurs on college campuses where students are the perpetrators, many question why information about the student's history, mental condition, or conduct issues have not been shared with others in the institution, including faculty members.
- Generally speaking, a college is limited in what it can share regarding students and with whom it can share that information. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the sharing of educational records, which include, among other items, disciplinary records, medical records, and application materials. By FERPA, these

records can only be released to individuals within the organization that have a “legitimate educational interest” in those records.

- Once again, however, the principle that the College can react to behaviors and conduct is very important. Concerns regarding unsafe behavior and suspicious activity should be reported immediately.

The College is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its staff and students and we have taken several measures to fulfill this commitment.

- The College has a full complement of well-trained and dedicated campus Peace Officers who are effectively deployed to maximize their visibility and minimize their response time. Peace Officers who have received specific College-designated training are armed in and outside of campus.
- We have adopted a new and more effective early alert communication system. For more information on this, please visit the MCC Alert [website](#) to learn more about our emergency notification system and to sign up.
- We have fully trained staff that engages in crisis management exercises on a regular basis so that the College is prepared to respond in an emergency.
- We have provided additional supports for students, such as the Academies model and Starfish, to assist them with their college experience and to identify any potential issues that might arise.
- We have improved the employee assistance plan for our employees, increasing the counseling services that employees and their family members can receive in times of crisis.

Campus-wide vigilance, however, is the key to preventing crisis situations. It is important for our for all members of the Campus community—faculty, staff, and students--to be fully engaged in identifying persons in crisis and to report issues as they are apparent. Faculty and staff concerned about students should speak with their chair or dean and report their concerns to Student Services; employees concerned about co-workers should speak with their supervisor or human resources; members of the College community concerned about campus visitors should contact Public Safety. “If you see something, say something” is an important mantra and is the best way to assist the College in preventing incidents from occurring.

Please bring your concerns forward. We cannot address situations if we do not know about them, and the College is committed to addressing all concerns regardless of whether they involve students, faculty and staff, or campus visitors. Together, we can create a safe and supportive learning and working environment. It is our shared responsibility.