



**University of Wisconsin -  
Whitewater  
Public Safety Taskforce Report  
March 2024**

# Executive Summary

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Public Safety Taskforce is an ad-hoc group designated to provide insight for Chancellor King and the Cabinet. The Taskforce was formed in January of 2024 and tasked with providing potential solutions to five main considerations:

- ❖ Enhancing and retooling our campus safety training and awareness for faculty, staff and students
- ❖ Strengthening our building manager program/processes
- ❖ Examining the residence hall safety programs/processes/procedures
- ❖ Solidifying our campus reapproach (especially the blue lights- in terms of the next steps)
- ❖ Confirming our process/procedures for sending alert messages

The Taskforce, overall, found the current campus systems to be adequate. The campus could function relatively safely under current conditions.

Recommendations:

1. The University's training programs need to be examined for refinement and updating with consideration of direct community involvement as trainers.
2. The Building Manager program should be reviewed independently and redeveloped with a focus on leveraging currently available technologies in common use to facilitate the expressed concerns.
3. Campus-wide stronger messaging to our resident student population, whether formal or informal, could increase a sense of "home ownership" within our halls. This will likely increase their awareness of available safety measures.
4. The blue light or call boxes are an antiquated technology that should be removed after the implementation of an educational and informational campaign outlining current GPS/911 capabilities.
5. Emergency alert considerations have been updated to consider highly emotional/triggering events and how to message those to the community.
6. The campus emergency message system is currently under review for upgrading or replacement by the appropriate campus partners. A detailed outline of the findings are included in this document.

The Taskforce members consisted of students, staff and faculty, including:

Academic Affairs Division	Sociology, Criminology and Anthropology
Facilities Planning and Management	Student Affairs Division
Human Resources	University Marketing and Communications
Information Technology Services	University Police
Residence Life	Whitewater Student Government

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee by Chief Matt Kiederlen

# Enhancing and retooling our campus safety training and awareness for faculty, staff and students

**Development of “train the trainer” programs** - Police should train Campus Service Officers and other volunteer University personnel to provide safety and security focused programming on behalf of the University Police. Campus Service Officers (student employees) could be effective in peer-to-peer led instruction. Where areas of reluctance are identified, faculty and staff participation will be promoted through creation of partnerships, to understand sources of reluctance and design programming to increase involvement.

**In person programs** - University Police should provide direct in-person instruction with other established student programs such as New Student Seminar, Greek 101, Student Organization Leadership and Recognized Student Organizations. Police should focus on community engagement, police familiarization and relationship development in these sessions. The intent is to help all parties understand expectations of each other, facilitate trust and share available resources.



University Police should establish a program for departmentally focused and location-specific training. For example, faculty and staff in the Center of the Arts may have different social expectations than the faculty and staff of Athletics. Locations all have unique capabilities and liabilities which should be addressed on an individualized basis.

**Augment required drills** - The University Police conduct and oversee several State and Federally mandated fire and tornado warning drills each year. A greater emphasis on providing information on the expectations and actions of individuals should be developed in collaboration with University Marketing and Communications. This should also be considered during the testing of the emergency messaging systems on campus.

**Merit Badge Awards** - In collaboration with University Marketing and Communications, work to utilize the existing Merit Badge Awards system to promote involvement.

***GOAL: The growth and establishment of a culture of learning and personal accountability must be viewed as a need within the process. Encouraging programming which brings together the students, staff and faculty of the University to solve mutual challenges.***

# Strengthening our Building Manager Program/Processes

**Establish a separate and distinct taskforce** - The Building Manager program needs to be reviewed and modernized. Specifically, the expectations were developed before many of the current technologies were available.

The taskforce should focus on these components:

- Establishing specific expectations and goals with a focus on current needs
- Complete review of e-access and physical keys processes
- How building hours are established
- How building specific operational messages should be communicated
- How building specific safety messages should be communicated
- How building occupants report building specific concerns to have actions taken

***GOAL: Development of a comprehensive program, involving the consolidation of currently separate systems, to enhance the overall physical safety and processes is needed.***



# Examining the Residence Hall Safety Programs/Processes/Procedures

**Teaching students on residence hall security** - Community expectations are provided to students by Resident Assistants, and other University Housing staff. Police Residence Hall Officers provide general safety programming geared toward student residents. Police should collaborate with Residence Life and Housing to further develop and implement programs geared toward empowering students to address their own security needs and concerns. The hope would be to further develop a sense of personal responsibility and ownership within the students, effectively establishing actions they would normally take in their “home” environment. The purpose is not to supplant the current training, only to provide enhancement.

**Security Cameras** - The residence hall security cameras should be evaluated within the on-going University-wide security camera project. Expansion into other common areas, exterior areas and an evaluation of student desires on resident floors, need to be considered.

**Reinstitute “Lock it or Lose it” or like program** - The “Lock it or Lose it” program consisted of a door hanger on each residence hall room reminding students of basic safety precautions and expectations. This was normally done mid-semester in both fall and spring. Police and Housing should work together to reimplement a similar program.

**Peepholes/Door Viewers** - Housing is currently exploring the viability of installing peepholes in all residence hall resident doors.



***GOAL: The physical security needs of the residence halls are more than minimally met. The greater challenge is encouraging the human element to utilize the tools already available. Human error and indifference create the majority of the physical security issues.***

# Solidifying our campus reapproach (especially the blue lights - in terms of the next steps)

**Call Boxes/Blue Lights** - Remove the call boxes during the upcoming Spring Break timeframe. Coordinate messaging through University Marketing and Communications, First Year Experience and Admissions, emphasizing the 911 GPS tracking capacities which currently exist. Facilities, Planning and Management already have a formulated plan for the removal.



**GOAL:** *The current call boxes/blue lights are an antiquated technology and replacement is not recommended. Any expenditure of capital toward the repair, replacement and enhancement of the campus-wide security camera systems is considered a much higher priority, a more modernized solution and will provide more security and evidentiary value.*

# Confirming our process/procedures for sending alert messages

**Recent events** - The Neo-Nazi incident which took place on campus demonstrated the need to consider messaging to address the perception of lack of safety, increased fear or highly emotional potentially triggering events. University Marketing and Communications and Police have already addressed this for potentially similar incidents and will provide messaging to assist in alleviating concerns, not just immediate safety, after an event.

**Available messaging systems** - A consistent emergency messaging system campaign should be considered. Educating the community on the available resources to receive information during any incident will help to alleviate stress and increase public participation in appropriate actions when an event takes place.

**Emergency messaging webpage** - A webpage or hub, with current University relevant information, would assist in addressing the public's desire for situational awareness. This page could also contain the instructions on how to download, install and utilize the emergency messaging systems, mental health resources and other emergency contact information. Additionally, required information, such as the Clery - Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, Alcohol and other Drug reports, could be housed here to simplify access and increase transparency.

**Physical and electronic alerting systems** - Information Technology Services, University Marketing and Communications and Police are currently in discussion on how best to address the known issue with the alerting systems on campus. The system was developed from a number of inhouse applications. While the system is functional, the numerous components, intense need for human oversight and continuous challenges demonstrate the need to consider an "all-in-one" 3rd party system.



**GOAL: Emergency messaging and crime alerts must be continuously addressed as the expectations of our society and student body's desire for information, reassurance and direction, consistently change, evolve and increase.**