

April 18, 2007

Dear friends and colleagues,

Events such as those at Virginia Tech are horrifying and arouse anxiety in various ways. We all may feel particularly vulnerable because if this could happen on one campus, we are reminded that it could happen anywhere. With this sobering thought in mind, director of counseling Dr. Karen Settle of Southern Methodist University offers the following suggestions for coping with the aftermath of this tragedy:

- Talk with each other as often as needed. You may want to have more contact with family and friends at this time, and that is normal.
- Express your feelings about the incident. Be supportive of each other, realizing that all feelings are legitimate.
- Be reassured that strong feelings after a tragedy are not uncommon. It is okay to recognize that it is upsetting to hear about the shootings at Virginia Tech.
- Consider asking yourself and each other, “Are you worried about anything at this point?” This will provide the opportunity to express any particular fears.
- Seek support from colleagues and encourage each other to seek support. Be alert to campus communications and familiar with emergency procedures on campus and encourage others to do likewise.
- If you, or someone you know needs to talk with a professional, suggest that he or she visit the Counseling Center (x 5418, or x 5952) or contact the Chaplains (x 6094, or x 5147), or connect with the Student Life staff (x 5233, or 5232)

You may also want to know how Hiram College would alert the campus in a similar catastrophic situation and how the College would respond.

In the event of such an emergency, we will use three primary sources to deliver information—the internet, voicemail, and word of mouth. We will issue global e-mail messages from Campus Safety, post advisories on [www.home.hiram.edu](http://www.home.hiram.edu) and the College website [www.hiram.edu](http://www.hiram.edu), and work through the Residence Life, Academic Deans and Student Life staff to get the word out. Campus Safety will respond to any emergency situation and immediately call in the appropriate municipal and state authorities. In addition, the College’s senior staff will convene immediately in accordance with our Emergency Response Protocols (ERP). In a situation of this magnitude, we would make every effort to keep people apprised as events unfold and would also shut down the normal activities of the College. Please keep in mind that catastrophes such as the one at Virginia Tech are very rare. Nevertheless, since hurricane Katrina and the threat of a pandemic influenza outbreak, we have been meeting weekly to sharpen our ERP. These proactive efforts will continue.

As an involved and caring community, we are our own best defense. In this spirit, I urge us all to pay attention to signals that may portend danger. Tell the appropriate people when worried. If comments from a friend, or passages written in an email, or some other form of expression concern you, please speak up. Contact Campus Safety (extension 0,

or from off campus 330-569-3211) or Student Life (x 5233 or x 5232), or the Academic Deans (x 5261, or x 5124) so that appropriate College staff can speak with the person, determine the motivation behind the message, and follow up in the appropriate manner. In the same spirit, it is important to give careful consideration before engaging in humor or other forms of expression that may strike others as morbid or violent.

Let us all keep the Virginia Tech community and their loved ones in our thoughts. For persons on, or near the Hiram College campus, a candlelight vigil will be held at 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday evening, April 18 in front of the Kennedy Student Center followed by an opportunity for to share thoughts and feelings about the tragedy at the Fisher All Faith Chapel.

Sincerely,

Eric Riedel  
Vice President and Dean of Students