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— EST. 1818 —

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The Message in Brief

Dear Billiken Parents and Families,

Last week, the FBI's annual report of local and national crime data for 2018 was shared broadly by the news media, and since at least one-fourth of our undergraduates are new, we wanted to ensure that SLU reiterated the systems and prevention measures that we have in place. Details are in the attached "Deep Dive" section.

Much like any college or university located in the heart of an urban environment, Saint Louis University is not immune from criminal acts against people and property that occur within the city we call home.

Recent headlines in the local mainstream media have elevated anxiousness among some staff, faculty, students, and you — their families. As a parent myself, I empathize with that. It is unnerving to read news stories and campus security alerts that students were victims of crimes on and near our campus.

In speaking with students around campus, they shared with me that they really do understand what living in a city is all about. They recognize — and take advantage of — the enormous benefits. And they are also mindful of any risks.

We are thankful that St. Louis police investigators have arrested a group of four young people for two alleged crimes at an off-campus apartment complex where students reside.

Jim Moran, our Director of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, reminds us, in any city that we need to be alert and aware of our surroundings, especially at night.

He says it's also important to know the facts, not just the sensational stories. According to Chief Moran, data collected by his staff and the St. Louis Metropolitan Police shows an overall reduction in crime in the Midtown area from January through August over the same period last year.

In recent days, Chief Moran and Kent Porterfield, Vice President of Student Development, have pressed the property manager at the apartment complex in question to devote much more attention and resources to crime prevention

Higher purpose. Greater good.

on and near their buildings. Student tenants have voiced their concerns to the property manager, as well. We expect to see changes immediately.

Chief Moran and Dr. Porterfield discussed this topic with members of the Billiken Parents Association during Homecoming week on [Facebook Live](#).

Here in Midtown, SLU has invested more than \$8 million in safety and security improvements over the past few years. And we are committed to investing more this academic year. We will share additional initiatives to enhance security on campus as our plans are finalized.

Beyond those investments, the most significant way to truly foster safer communities is through meaningful and lasting social change that lifts up everyone in our city — transformational change that recognizes each person's intrinsic human value and dignity.

I encourage you to continue having conversations with your students about their own feelings of safety on our campus and in our city and recommend that they bring those thoughts to us as well.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred P. Pestello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D.
President

The Deep Dive

It is understandable that a number of parents and caregivers have been alarmed.

Over a two-week period, our DPS alert system— and local news stories— reported that a few students were victims of several violent crimes on and near our campus. Staff from the Dean of Students Office, the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, the Office of Mission and Identity, and from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) moved with urgency and compassion to assist and support our young people. Patrols were increased.

It is helpful to have data to balance the perception created by these news stories. Crime data collected by DPS, the largest university security unit of any in Missouri, and the St. Louis Metropolitan Police shows that violent and properties crimes in our area are lower than last year.

In fact, the majority of crimes reported on our North and South Campuses and at the Law School involve thefts of personal property, including laptops, smartphones, headphones, backpacks and bicycles. We've even experienced a recent spate of laundry thefts in some residence halls.

You can review yearly campus crime data in our [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#) and keep up-to-date with the latest on our [Daily Crime Log](#). Please sign-up for the [parent safety list-serve](#) to receive emails from DPS.

Chris Prener, Ph.D., a member of our Sociology faculty, studies crime data. From January to August 2019, Dr. Prener reported, violent crime dropped 29.31 percent in the Midtown neighborhood as compared to the same period last year, from 11.13 incidents per 1,000 people to 7.87.

And the incidence of property crimes plus violent crimes dropped 14.49 percent to 46.46 incidents per 1,000 people. That's fairly low.

Additionally, according to Dr. Prener's analysis, of the three other neighborhoods adjoining our campus, the combined property and violent crime rate dropped in Tiffany by 36.05 percent and in the Gate District by 8.23 percent. Of the third, the Covenant Blu-Grand Center neighborhood, the increase was 3 additional incidents per 1,000 people to 69.23 incidents per 1,000.

One off-campus apartment complex, in particular, was the site of two car thefts by force. Jim Moran, Director of the DPS, and Kent Porterfield, Vice President of Student Development, have been very firm about the University's expectations

of the property manager. Student renters from SLU and Harris Stowe have voiced their concerns to the property manager, as well. On-site security details and electronic monitoring will increase, we're told. We will verify those actions.

In recent years, we have invested more than \$8 million in improvements that enhance the safety and security of our campus. More investments will be made in the year ahead.

Pedestrian Safety

To enhance pedestrian safety, we worked in partnership with the City of St. Louis to make significant improvements along Grand Boulevard between Laclede Avenue and Lindell Boulevard. The project's highlights include:

- Wider medians and elimination of one of Grand's three northbound lanes to help slow traffic.
- Addition of a brick-like surface to every intersection and more prominent signage to remind drivers to slow down.
- Installation of bollards at Grand and West Pine Mall — our busiest crossing point — to protect pedestrians standing in the median and at the crosswalks.

The campus also is better illuminated at night, thanks to the Division of Facilities Services installing new lighting in all SLU parking garages and lots, as well as along walkways and sidewalks.

Students, staff and faculty are free to request a security escort on campus or to a nearby location, such as the MetroLink station. More than 28,000 security escorts were provided last year.

Safety Technology

We have introduced new mobile security technology that can be used by everyone in our campus community. [Rave Guardian](#) is a free app available through Google Play and Apple stores that turns smartphones into personal security devices. The app's unique features include:

- An inbox for all alerts sent through SLU's Emergency Notification System.
- A 911 call button that instantly shares the user's GPS location.
- Ability to anonymously text suspicious activity to DPS.
- Ability to build a personal safety network with friends and family who can serve as "guardians" whom users can alert when they're headed out somewhere.

We also added [Alertus Desktop Notification](#) to our emergency notification system. When DPS issues an emergency notification via text message and phone calls, all SLU-managed computers or laptops connected to the

University's network (wired or "SLU-Users") display a full-screen, pop-up alert providing information about the situation.

Through our strong relationship with the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, we helped fund the installation of automatic license plate recognition readers at two locations within our campus borders. Mounted on traffic lights, these readers feed directly into the city police department's Real-Time Crime Center, which checks license plate data against a database of stolen vehicles and vehicles used in crimes. The first sets of license plate readers have been installed at Grand and Lindell at Grand and Park Avenue.

On campus, we have increased the number of cameras inside buildings and throughout exterior areas to more than 1,100. These cameras not only serve as a deterrent, but they also aid in investigations when incidents do occur. These cameras are fed into our state-of-the-art DPS communication center in Wool Center, which is staffed 24/7.

Education and Training

Education, training and support are vital components of our campus safety and emergency preparedness efforts. Over the past year, we provided training to more than 11,700 members of our SLU community through a variety of programs, including:

- Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (A.L.I.C.E)
- Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
- Alcohol Awareness Training
- R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) Training
- Bystander Intervention Awareness and Training

Working for the Greater Good

In addition to striving to enhance safety and security on our campus, SLU is committed as a Catholic, Jesuit institution to helping our city and region address some of the long-standing racial and social issues that undermine literacy and education, foster hopelessness, break apart families and foster despair and lawlessness in our city.

Our faculty, staff and students are working with the people of St. Louis to reimagine, transform and unify our city. Below are just a few examples of this vital endeavor:

- **Overground Railroad to Literacy:** Established in 2014 by the late Criminology Professor Norm White, Ph.D., and several of his students, this tutoring and volunteer training program connects SLU students with students in schools throughout North St. Louis as tutors and mentors. Among its goals, Overground Railroad to Literacy seeks to

intentionally build relationships and bridges of trust to improve student academic performance and disrupt the school to prison pipeline.

- **Shut It Down: Closing the School to Prison Pipeline:** Another legacy of Dr. White, this collaborative initiative provides racial equity and implicit bias education for teachers in Saint Louis Public Schools so that they are better able to work with students who have experienced trauma or severe stress in their lives outside of the classroom. The goal is not only to address the disparity of high-suspension rates for African-American youth, but also to assist school personnel in altering school culture to ensure that students to improve educationally.
- **Ferguson Youth Initiative:** SLU supports the Ferguson Youth Initiative (FYI), which empowers teens from Ferguson and surrounding communities to become productive, positive and contributing members of the community. On a regular basis, Charles Martin III, Community Engagement Coordinator with our Cross Cultural Center, works with FYI students to help them write college essays, complete college applications and prepare for the ACT and SAT.
- **The Justice Fleet:** Launched by Communication Professor Amber Johnson, Ph.D., these mobile museums foster community healing through art, play, and dialogue. Housed inside of box trucks, the Justice Fleet ventures into a variety of neighborhoods — in St. Louis and beyond — to engage community members in discussions about implicit and explicit bias, social justice, empathy and communal healing.
- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Policies for Action Program:** A team of SLU faculty are evaluating the effects of racial equity and social justice initiatives on policy nationwide thanks to a prestigious grant from the foundation. Led by law professors Ruqaiyah Yearby, J.D., M.P.H., and Sidney D. Watson, J.D., the team's research seeks to identify promising new policies that cities and counties can use to dismantle neighborhood segregation, increase employment options, and improve childhood education for people of color.

Through these meaningful works and so many others, we are reminded that safety and security cannot be addressed through new technologies and infrastructure improvements alone. While important, the only way to truly foster safer communities is through meaningful and lasting social change that lifts everyone in our city and region — transformational change that recognizes each person's intrinsic human value and dignity.

I am proud that SLU is at the heart of so many of these initiatives.