Date: September 26, 2013

To: The University Community

From: Vincent Carilli, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs
Chair, Incident Management Team

Subject: Summary of Emergency Preparedness

Each year, colleges and universities are required by federal law to notify their faculty, staff and students about exercises and drills that are undertaken related to security and safety on campus. The University of Scranton conducts emergency response exercises each year, such as tabletop exercises, field exercises, and tests of the emergency notification systems on campus. These tests are designed to assess and evaluate the emergency plans and capabilities of the institution.

Over the summer, The University completed a two-part test of the emergency response and evacuation plans. On August 16, 2013, an external consultant facilitated and monitored a tabletop exercise involving an active shooter in a University building to test various components of the University’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As would be the case in an actual emergency, the initial response to the simulated incident engaged Scranton Police, Lackawanna County Emergency Communication Center, and the Incident Management Team, which I chair. Our facilitator provided a detailed After Action Report and Improvement Plan.

At 12:45 p.m., on September 10, 2013, the University completed a test of the emergency notification system through BlackBoard Connect. Blackboard Connect distributed email messages to all students, faculty and staff. The system placed telephone calls and sent text messages to all members of the community who have registered for these additional services. If you have not yet registered to receive emergency text and voice messages through Blackboard Connect, you can do so by visiting the University’s my.scranton portal, clicking on the Home tab and selecting the link titled Local Contact/Emergency Notification System Registration.

On September 10, 2013, and again on September 12, 2013, the University conducted an annual test of the Emergency Evacuation Plan. On September 10, 2013, each academic building on the lower campus was evacuated by activating its fire alarm. The academic buildings on the upper campus were evacuated on September 12, 2013. Evacuation procedures are tested each semester in every residence hall individually.

The University’s Emergency Operations Plan is designed to create a flexible, overarching process for the management of all types of internal and external emergency incidents that may affect the campus environment. With a scope covering all employees, students, contractors, and vendors, the plan includes: a hazard vulnerability analysis; a purpose statement and objectives; an operational format; functional annexes; incident specific annexes and appendices. Individual departments are responsible for developing contingency plans and continuity of operations plans for their staff and areas of responsibility.
University Police Officers and supervisors have received training in incident command and how to respond to critical incidents on campus. When a serious incident occurs that causes an immediate threat to the campus, the first responders to the scene will be the University Police and, depending on the nature of the incident, the Scranton Police, the Scranton Bureau of Fire and the Lackawanna County Ambulance. Each agency will respond and work together to manage the incident under a unified command system. Depending on the nature of the incident, other University departments and other local or federal agencies could also be involved in responding to the incident.

General information about the University’s emergency response and evacuation procedures are publicized each year through the Public Safety website as part of compliance with the Clery Act.

Be assured that the University will continue to work to improve our planning and procedures to be prepared to respond to emergency situations should they arise. Should you have any questions about the University’s emergency response procedures, please contact universitypolice@scranton.edu or healthandsafety@scranton.edu.

Best wishes for a successful academic year.