

Statement of Chancellor Wells on steps taken following March 8 incident in Reeve Memorial Union

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University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Chancellor Richard Wells shared the following statement with the campus community on March 13:

Students and colleagues,

These have been challenging days for our University of Wisconsin Oshkosh community after a Saturday, March 8 incident involving a single gunshot fired into the ceiling of Reeve Memorial Union during a student event.

However, I am proud of the many ways we, together, continue to face and examine this rare instance of violence on our campus. While no one was injured, and we are very thankful for that, the incident has raised several appropriate questions about campus security, communications and event management. The only person responsible for the brazen act of violence that night is the perpetrator. We are, nevertheless, accountable for one another's safety as a campus community. Therefore, we are actively inviting, listening to and addressing feedback and concerns.

We speak with a united voice in condemning this act of violence. We are equally united in the understanding that our top priority right now is to support and aid our University Police department in its investigation and the successful apprehension of the individual responsible.

I join our campus community in expressing deep gratitude to University Police, the city of Oshkosh Police Department, the Reeve Memorial Union staff, members of our Black Student Union, residence hall staff and others who immediately helped secure buildings and our broader campus. Everyone acted swiftly and did many things well Saturday night to make UW Oshkosh safe.

We must also own what we did not do so well. Since Saturday, we have had the opportunity to closely examine our event management and safety protocols and our decisions before, during and after the incident. Specifically, we are reviewing campus event security procedures and our campus-wide emergency communication system. Changes are already being made to enhance planning and staffing and to improve the speed of emergency alerts, but not at the expense of clarity and accuracy. The changes will include:

- Designation and training of more staff and University Police Titan Alert message issuers.
- Stronger event management planning to incorporate reliable attendance projections and capacity limits.
- Enhanced and proactive host, staff and police planning to account for each campus event's unique security needs. We will create a broader menu of available security measures, including tools such as metal detection wands, to be used where and when appropriate.

Our temporary moratorium on most night time events at UW Oshkosh has been put in place to provide time for policy and, especially, security improvements. We will continue working with student organization leaders and seek input from our University governance group leaders. There is no ongoing threat to campus safety and wellbeing. My hope is that we can lift the moratorium once stronger and mutually-agreed-upon safety standards and practices are in place.

In the meantime, I want to reassure our students, staff, faculty, all of their families, our alumni, neighbors and our many stakeholders in the broader community that UW Oshkosh is a safe place to learn, work and live. Individually and collectively, we accept the responsibility for keeping it a place where everyone is supported and can thrive in the pursuit of knowledge.

We will learn and grow from this incident. Our ongoing, collaborative efforts to examine what happened and the good and the bad of our response are already leading to improvements that will make us safer and stronger.

Richard Wells,

Chancellor