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NCCC might be in the student success business, but what is always first and foremost in our minds is safety and security - for our students, community members, and our employees. There is a theory in psychology called Maslow's Hierarchy of Need that states that after our basic physical needs are met, the next, most important need is security. We cannot progress to learn and grow if we are not safe. For NCCC that means that we understand students will not do well in classes and succeed academically if they don't feel safe. This idea of "feeling" safe recently hit home to me.

About a month ago the Inbody garage was broken into when we weren't home. The thieves took my Garmin GPS (satellite mapping system) out of the car, my gas can for the mower (and yes, I just filled it up) and some frozen food from the garage freezer. Based on some evidence left behind I think the thief sat in my car and ate my fudge bar. That's what really made me mad. The loss of the Garmin was particularly painful, since I had just bought it as a replacement for the one that was stolen out of my car the month before when Jen and I went to Kansas City for our 17<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

You may have been a victim of a crime in your life, most of us have. We all react differently afterwards. I was angry and had to fight the urge to disinfect my garage. My girls were very bothered by it at first. They didn't feel safe for a while.

And that is what safety is – a feeling. You are the only one who can control how you feel. We want you to feel safe and secure while you are attending class or a campus event. So we devote a great deal of our resources toward helping you make the decision to feel safe.

Our first line of defense is training. From the first day of work each employee is taught what to do in an emergency and how to guard student safety. Employees are trained in CPR, how to handle weather events like tornados, and to be diligent.

We use a wide array of technology to protect our constituents. NCCC was one of the first colleges in the nation to use text messaging for emergency notification, years before the tragedy at Virginia Tech. When Ben Smith, our chair of the Safety and Security Committee, and I came up with the idea for text messaging every student's cell phone, we were looking for a way to quickly notify all students when we had a snow day. After Virginia Tech it was reassuring to know we already had something in place that could warn all students simultaneously. We call it Panther Text Net. We also use the system to let people know about athletic and student events. You can sign up too! Just go to [www.neosho.edu](http://www.neosho.edu) and click on Panther Text Net on the home page. It is free (you pay for the text like all other texts you receive) and it's a great way to stay in touch with what is going on at the College.

We have recently upgraded our text system to a product called AlertUS. Not only can it send a text message to all 3,700 students and employees within minutes, it can send an email to all NCCC accounts, and take over every computer monitor at the campus to give emergency information.

NCCC is one of the few Colleges anywhere to have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in every building, including Ottawa. This is the device that can help shock your heart back into normal rhythm. All of our employees that go through the CPR class are also trained to use the AED.

We have 68 security cameras on the Chanute campus and 39 cameras on the Ottawa campus watching the parking lots, buildings and hallways, all hooked into our computer network. So we can see and record nearly everything happening in public spaces.

Several buildings, including our residence halls, use electronic card locks so that we can secure the building, but still allow metered access to the folks that need it. Just walk up to the door and the lock senses the card in your pocket. It unlocks the door for you, but also records that it was you that opened the door at that time.

NCCC employs a security company to walk the buildings in the evenings and early hours of the morning, as well as watch the parking lots when night classes end. Speaking of parking lots, we have very bright lights in our lots. In fact, the new Ottawa campus lot, where most of our night classes are located, is four times brighter than the industry standard calls for.

Each campus has Code Blue emergency poles outside. Just walk up, push one button and the police will be on their way. When we have outdoor events the College uses lightning detectors to determine how close a storm is, in order to know when to delay the event until it is safe to proceed.

Our fire suppression system is excellent. We just completed a project to put a new sprinkler system in Rowland Hall as part of our renovation. At the Ottawa campus our emergency alert system is ahead of what current code requires. Not only does it have a klaxon to get your attention, it has a prerecorded voice that tells you what is going on, including fire, storm warnings, and other emergencies.

Recently NCCC had a visit from the Kansas Department of Labor to check both campuses for safety issues. As you can imagine, the College passed with flying colors.

At home, my GPS system can be replaced, as can the fudge bars, but what not as easy to restore is the feeling of safety and security. I have taken some steps at home to make my family feel safer. Restoring that feeling will take a little time.

Learning cannot occur until students feel safe. Safety and security are our first responsibilities to our students and community members who come to our campuses. But beyond that, establishing and maintaining that feeling of safety takes resources and constant diligence. And it is a responsibility that we welcome.

As always if you have any questions or comments please contact me at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu).