

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Handbook Revision, Emergency Alert System

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110 315) requires institutions to inform their respective campuses of conditions posing a threat to life, safety, and security so that members of the community can take necessary precautions to protect themselves. Further, 34 CFR 668.46(e) and related provisions require institutions to provide timely warning and emergency notification to the campus community of certain crimes, including those considered by the institution to represent a threat to students and employees.

Consistent with federal requirements, current Board policy establishes policies to protect campus communities, including a requirement for police departments to provide immediate warnings to the campus community about dangerous individuals. Specifically, *Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 12.13* of the *Handbook* states:

All NSHE police departments must comply with federal requirements of the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act , 20 U.S.C. §1092(f), 34 CFR 668.46 and shall provide widely disseminated monthly reports on campus crime to all members of the campus community through email or other mechanisms. Immediate warnings to the campus community shall be provided if the police departments have reliable information about dangerous individuals in the area or of crimes in the immediate vicinity of the institution that are not yet solved.

Through an “opt in” system, students and employees may elect to receive notification of campus emergencies, but such a system does not effectively ensure that all students and employees have the opportunity to receive notification of emergencies or other conditions that may pose a threat to life, safety, and security on the campuses. The Student Affairs Council and campus police representatives recommend a formal policy on emergency alert notifications requiring students to “opt out” to ensure the greatest participation possible in the notification system. Currently, NSHE institutions have varying emergency alert systems, including opt-in system (UNR, DRI, CSN), opt-out systems (UNLV, NSC, GBC, WNC), and use of a public information officer and regional response systems for major disasters (TMCC).

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 1* of the *Handbook* to add a new section that requires each institution to establish an emergency alert notification system for the institution's students and staff and further require the institution to obtain a cell phone number or email address to be used to notify the individual in the event of an emergency. (See the attached policy proposal.)

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

Representatives of NSHE campus police departments brought this policy recommendation to the Student Affairs Council (SAC), and the SAC recommends this policy for Board consideration and approval.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- An “opt-out” emergency alert system will better serve to promote the safety and security of a campus by ensuring that students and employees will be enrolled in and receive notification of the emergency situations so they can respond appropriately to protect themselves and others.
- The burden on students and employees to provide contact information is minimal, and individuals can elect not to participate.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been presented.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

None have been presented.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 Amends Current Board Policy: Title # 4 Chapter # 1 *new* Section # 33
 Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 Fiscal Impact: Yes X No _____
Explain: Quotes have been requested for the cost of a statewide emergency alert system, which is anticipated to be less than \$50,000 systemwide.

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 1, *new* SECTION 33
Emergency Alert System

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 33. Emergency Alert System

As required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315), NSHE institutions must inform their respective campuses of conditions posing a threat to life, safety, and security so that members of the community can take necessary precautions to protect themselves.

- 1. Each institution shall establish an emergency alert notification system for the institution's students and staff, including faculty. The emergency alert system must use cell phone text notifications in addition to any other alert method the institution considers appropriate to provide timely notification of emergencies affecting the institution or its students and staff.*
- 2. At the time a student initially enrolls or registers for courses or a staff member begins employment, the institution shall:
 - a. Obtain a personal cell phone number or e-mail address from the student or staff member to be used to notify the individual in the event of an emergency;*
 - b. Register the student or staff member in the institution's emergency alert notification system; and*
 - c. Students and staff are responsible for updating their contact information, and the institution may require periodic updating of the contact information.**
- 3. A student or staff member may elect not to participate in an emergency alert system established under this section. An election under this subsection must be submitted electronically or in writing.*
- 4. Institutions shall establish procedures to allow students and staff members to change their election status.*
- 5. The personal identifying information obtained from an individual for the purpose of the emergency alert notification system is confidential and the notification system shall be used for emergency announcements only. The emergency alert notification system will be tested no less than twice annually.*