

## May 1 Meeting

### Faculty senate Resources and Environment Subcommittee co-chair meeting with NCSU police regarding WolfAlert senator concern

#### Who was present:

Chief Jack Moorman, Major David Kelly, & Shawn Troxler from the University police / general counsel  
Kimberly Ange-van Heugten & Helmut Hergeth from the NCSU faculty senate

#### Introduction:

Due to a faculty expressed concern at the last two faculty senate meetings of Spring 2017 regarding potential race inequities within the WolfAlert reporting system, Drs. Ange-van Heugten and Hergeth arranged a meeting to learn more about the WolfAlert system to report back to the faculty senate.

#### Meeting Main points:

All WolfAlerts report the suspect's race (no matter what that is) and all other identifying characteristics when it is known and when The Clery Act requires. NCSU must adhere to the Clery Act due to Title 4 funding. When safety alerts differ in language among NCSU and local police force postings is it typically because those postings (from City of Raleigh for example) do not have to adhere to Clery as NCSU does.

[More information on Clery Act reporting requirements can be found at:

<http://campuspolice.ehps.ncsu.edu/forms/campus-authority-incident-report/>] In addition, senators Ange-van Heugten and Hergeth were introduced to Elisa Lopez the NCSU Clery compliance officer.

This reporting policy is 100% included for all alerts when the subject is at large in order to best keep the campus safe. Once the suspect is in custody and there is no threat to the campus then race or any other description are no longer included in WolfAlerts. This is also the case when a WolfAlert is not needed because there is no continuing threat

No race is listed in a WolfAlert if the university police do not have the information or if the victim is not confident in their description (Ex: a victim of a burglary sees only a figure in the room). University police officials were asked if suspects ever reported the wrong race by accident or by potential media bias, and the answer was no. That when victim reported a race and it was sent in WolfAlert and suspects were caught, the victims were correct about what they reported.

There are some times when WolfAlert cannot be sent or cannot report suspect information. For example, due to the Clery Act, a sexual assault victim / survivor can ask to be anonymous. The police know this information, but no victim information nor perpetrator information is required to be announced. Clery still mandates that the crime itself be reported. The weblink above better defines the categories of Clery crimes which are required to be sent out and what is at the discretion of the Clery officers decision on safety.

University police were asked if their WolfAlert policies on suspect descriptions differed from other university campuses. They responded that NCSU is a leading example of how to properly follow the Clery act in order to ensure public safety and be as non-biased as possible. That non-biased reporting has been an area of discussion for many years at that they are always looking for ways to improve and

keep the campus safe. There is a NACCOP conference yearly (National Association of Clery Compliance Officers) and the Clery handbook is over 300 pages. Different universities may interpret some parts of the handbook differently, but, again – NCSU is considered a leader in this area and NCSU is committed to use best practices in reporting as much as possible about every suspect at large in order to keep our campus safe – race / sex / clothing / hair / facial markings / etc. – (with photo or video when available). This information is, of course, only as good as the victim's report.

Currently, after years of discussion, NACCOP suggest using standard race descriptors at that is what NCSU does. NCSU did try using shade descriptors before (light to dark complexion) and it didn't work as well. The NCSU 911 and information center received a large increase in volume of phone calls for better explanations for the descriptors and this led to fear that the information was not helping catch the suspect and was using valuable resources unnecessarily.

The university police believe that the current descriptors in use have helped in catching many suspects and that would be more difficult to arrest if it was decided to limit the information that is released to the public about safety threats.

It has previously been mentioned that sometimes a WolfAlert with little suspect information "white male in grey hoodie" is so little information that it is better to not publish it. However, the university police does not agree with this statement. The officials say that this information (while limited) has led to leads and arrests because often the time of day is unique of human traffic (3am for example) and if someone saw the above mentioned white male jump into a white truck on a nearby street at 3am then that is a new lead and will help solve the case.

An NCSU student recently met with University police about his concerns that the WolfAlert system is potentially race biased. While meeting with this student, there was discussion about adding a sentence to the WolfAlerts that discrimination of any kind (race, gender, creed, etc.) at NCSU is not tolerated. However, our group did discuss the fact that WolfAlerts are already very long and wordy and that adding more disclaimers at the bottom may take the seriousness of the alerts away even more than what is currently feared.

The current information at the bottom of the WolfAlerts is there because the Clery Act requires providing safety tips to the university public. There has been discussion before that these tips sometimes appear to victim blame and that is never the attempt. They are simply trying to meet the standard of the law without having too much fluff and encourage everyone on campus to think about their safety.

The Assistant General Counsel explained that the descriptions are not a discrimination issue, but that vague description might support stereotypes, which is a very different issue. This issue is being addressed by the Citizens' Academy each Spring (a 3-hour program, one night for 8 weeks), the Coffee with a Cop programs in conjunction with multicultural student affairs in order to foster a better police and student relationship, and other communication efforts by Campus Polices as well as many other groups on campus. There are also several safety programming events across campus each year (dorm safety, etc.). The university police welcome all requests to speak at events, in classes and to meet with the university community. They welcome more faculty into the program to help share our insights and to learn more about what they do.

All supervisors at Campus Police are graduates of unconscious bias training programs.

The University police welcome the idea of presenting about WolfAlert to the Faculty senate during the 2017 – 2018 calendar year. The presentation is around 20 - 30 minutes and could be tailored differently by request and potential question timing.

In summary, the University police report the facts as they have them that they are legally allowed to report. There is no bias for any reason. Their goal is to have an inclusive campus for everyone but to also keep everyone safe. They welcome increased interaction with the Faculty senate and the campus community.

After the meeting, Chief Moorman toured Drs. Ange-van Heugten and Hergeth around the police center. We were able to visit the 911 call center and hear information on the campus camera systems and how crimes are reported and distributed to available officers. We were also able to tour the rest of the station and meet several officers and detectives.