



# Rhodes College

I want to share some important updates with you regarding campus safety enhancements.

As we notified you in a campus safety warning, we had some car break-ins last week, a situation I know was very upsetting to those impacted. Please know we are working continually on keeping our campus safe. I want to applaud our campus safety officers who worked diligently to locate the suspects, who were in the process of moving from the west side of campus to the east side. Upon making eye contact with our safety officers through the fence, the suspects fled immediately.

In light of this situation, we are taking two immediate steps. We have installed an asphalt “speed hump” at the Charles Street vehicle gates to eliminate the gap under the gate that was large enough for a person to crawl through. We are now locking the Spann lot gate 24 hours a day. Those currently using that lot will need to call Campus Safety to open it. I realize that is an inconvenience, but it is better than the alternative. We have already initiated the process to convert the Spann gate to a fobbed one that will be closed at all times and users will be able to swipe for access. It is a complicated installation because of the steep drive into the lot and the need to install electrical power at the site, so we estimate that process will take 3-4 weeks to complete.

I have met with the Memphis police chief, the county mayor, and our city mayor over the last few weeks, and crime has been the central topic of these conversations. They understand our concerns and have pledged their collaboration. Unfortunately, Memphis is not alone. All cities and many campuses are dealing with an increase in criminal behavior, a problem that has been magnified post-pandemic. Last week alone, Purdue and the University of Arizona both experienced horrific crimes on their campuses. The answers are not easy or quick, but we are continuing to increase resources to further campus safety.

Our newly appointed Campus Safety Task Force begins meeting next week. We will create a website to communicate the progress of this 23-member work team and we will offer opportunities for input from all our campus constituencies. They will be tasked to study campus safety and community collaboration in depth and will forward their recommendations to me.

Additionally, I have decided to hire a new Associate Vice President for Campus Safety and move our campus safety operation to the Finance and Business Affairs Division, reporting directly to Kyle Webb, Vice President for Finance and Business Affairs, effective immediately. This change will elevate the role of our chief campus safety officer and bring it into organizational alignment with many of our peers. It also recognizes that campus safety impacts not only our students, but our faculty, staff, and visitor communities as well. The AVP position will be posted as soon as possible. Ike Sloas will remain in his role of Director of Campus Safety and will work with the new Associate Vice President upon their arrival.

Although the reporting lines are changing, Campus Safety will always work closely and collaboratively with the Division of Student Life to meet the needs of our students.

I want to express my deep gratitude to Ike for his dedicated leadership of the campus safety team, especially during the extraordinary challenges of the past two years. I am grateful that he will remain in his role as director of campus safety, continuing to provide depth and experience to our campus safety operations.

Campus safety remains our highest priority. It is important for all of us to say something if we see something happening on or around our campus that looks unusual. Please program the Campus Safety number (901-843-3880) into your phone so they can be reached easily. If you have an emergency off campus, please dial 9-1-1 to reach the Memphis Police Department.

I look forward to working with the Campus Safety Task Force, our senior leadership team, and each of you to enhance safety for all of us.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Collins**

President

Rhodes College