NOVA, a vital education component of Northern Virginia and the National Capital Region, is an attractive venue for influential political officials by virtue of our size, the diversity of the campus community, the dynamism of ideas on our campuses, and the distribution of NOVA campuses and centers throughout Northern Virginia.

President Obama has been to NOVA twice and on July 14, Hillary Clinton, the Presidential candidate of the Democrat Party and Tim Kaine, former Virginia Governor and current U.S. Senator, visited the Annandale campus’ Ernst Center for a one-hour speech.

The College did not get word of the candidate’s planned visit until a few days before it was to occur. Once NOVA was informed of Clinton’s proposed visit, a frenzy of daily activities (many lasting until late in the evening) commenced to ensure the safety and security for the candidate, her team, and 3,000 expected attendees. This formidable task required a vast NOVA team effort as well as coordination with numerous outside agencies.

NOVA planning team members included representatives from President Ralls’ office, NOVA Police, the Office of Emergency Management and Safety, Parking, Facilities, the Public Information Office, Information Technology, and many more. In addition to identifying the College’s priorities and plans for this event, and then consolidating NOVA resources to support them, NOVA officials coordinated with the United States Secret Service, the Virginia State Police, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), Fairfax County Police/Fire and Rescue, local hospitals, and local media.

Senior Commonwealth education officials toured NOVA’s Emergency Operations Center. Pictured left to right are Dr. Glenn DuBois, VCCS Chancellor; Dr. Scott Ralls, NOVA President; Mr. Todd Rowley, Virginia College Board Chair; Chief Dan Dusseau, NOVA Police; and Mr. Tom Mayhew, OEMS Director.
The result of these meetings was a 30-page plan that addressed communications requirements, fixed and roving teams to ensure safety and security for all attendees, traffic control in and around the event, parking, communications with the public as well as NOVA community members, the protection of protestors’ free speech while maintaining order and civility, and the comfort of the attendees, many of whom waited outside for hours in temperatures approaching 100 degrees.

NOVA’s Emergency Operations Center, known as the EOC and located in the Brault Building, was stood up for the first time. Directed by OEMS, with representatives from NOVA’s Police, IT, PIO, Finance, and the VDEM, the EOC provided direct support to the command post. The EOC had the capability to intervene with critical support in the event of a crisis during the event. During the course of EOC operations, President Ralls, the Virginia Community College System’s Chancellor, Dr. Glenn DuBois, and Virginia College Board Chairperson Mr. Todd Rowley, visited the state-of-the-art facility and were briefed on their capabilities by OEMS Director Mayhew. The officials complimented President Ralls on the EOC’s efficiency and effectiveness, noting it appeared to be in control of the situation and able to handle any contingency.

The Clinton visit was a complete success, and NOVA received compliments from the Secret Service about the security and professionalism of the event. The significant security and planning activities that permitted such a successful visit are eloquent testimony to NOVA’s teamwork and the professionalism of its staff.

NOVA Police, Office of Emergency Management, and other personnel brief and prepare for the arrival of the campaign event.

OEMS Director, Tom Mayhew, briefs NOVA President Ralls on EOC operations.
The crowds lined up in the heat for hours waiting for the doors to open. Emergency equipment was on hand.

The overflow crowd was seated in the theater.

A NOVA police officer keeps a watchful eye on the event.
Reminder to Keep Exit Routes Clear

With a new semester approaching, we are all busy getting our office and classroom spaces ready. New supplies are arriving, new buildings are being opened, offices are being relocated, and summer cleaning has generated clutter to be discarded.

Messes happen—we get it—but that doesn’t mean we can forget our safety. As you prepare for the new semester, make sure emergency exits are not blocked. Exit routes are marked with exit signs on the ceiling and above the door. You can also find exit route maps in each classroom.

Ensure exit routes are free and unobstructed by materials or supplies. Exit routes must support the maximum permitted occupant load for each floor served, and the capacity of an exit route may not decrease in the direction of exit route travel to the exit discharge. This regulation also includes the exterior of a building as well, and paths leading away from emergency exits must also be unobstructed.

Below are examples of blocked exit routes that violate Virginia Fire Code. Even a minor blockage potentially endangers life and limb in the event of an evacuation owing to a fire, HAZMAT spill, active incident, or some other emergency!

If you have questions about emergency exits or any aspect of emergency response, please contact the NOVA Office of Emergency Management and Safety at OEM@nvcc.edu.

Did you know? In 2014, according to FBI statistics, 72,961 property crime offenses were reported on campuses and 64,811 of those (89%) were larceny-thefts. Some of the most common targets of larceny-theft on a campus are bicycles as well as small items such as laptop computers, cell phones and wallets. These numbers are probably low since many victims do not report larcenies to the police.

Do yourself a favor: keep your personal effects with you and under observation at all times. Be aware of your environment and those around you. Mark your property with identifying marks (e.g., your student number), and if your property is stolen, report the theft immediately to police (go to the campus police office or call Dispatch at 703-764-5000), with any information about possible suspects, when you last had your property, where you were, etc.
Safety Concerns Emerge as Pokémon Go Explodes in the U.S.

*Pokémon Go* is a location-based augmented reality mobile game released on July 6, 2016. Since its release, the game broke records as the most downloaded game in the U.S. in three days. The game allows players to capture, battle, and train virtual Pokémon who appear throughout the real world. After a player logs in, an avatar is created and, using the phone’s GPS and camera, the player’s current location along with a map of the player’s immediate surroundings is formed. Features on the map may include a number of PokéStops and Pokémon gyms.

PokéStops and Pokémon gyms are typically located at popular meeting places, such as college campuses, which house many landmarks that make ideal PokéStops. This creates an increase in public traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular, coming on and off campuses. The National Safety Council urges pedestrians to exercise caution while playing Pokémon Go and the Council implores drivers to refrain from playing the game while behind the wheel, noting distraction is a well-documented threat to safety, both on foot and on our roads. Distracted walking has contributed to more than 11,000 injuries in the last decade and distracted driving kills thousands each year.

Reports of pedestrian-auto accidents, robberies, and minor crimes and incidents are evident as use of the game spreads. In addition, D.C. police have issued safety tips for the public. These include:

1. Always be aware of your surroundings, and look up from your phone frequently;
2. Do not play the game at night and stay out of poorly lit areas;
3. Try to stay in public areas where other people are around;
4. Stay clear of alleyways, tunnels and other secluded areas; and
5. Make sure that someone else knows you are playing, and where you are playing.

For now, play safe, think safe, and catch those Pokémon!

NOVA Police Training and Events

The NOVA Police conduct an active community outreach program and are looking for opportunities to address your class, club, division, or campus at large on any of the following topics:

- Active Shooter Response
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Staying Safe in the Classroom
- Staying Safe on the Campus
- Self-Defense Considerations
- 10 Things Adjuncts (and other faculty) Should Know About Security
- Bomb Threat Response
- Sexual Assault, Crimes Against Women, and/or Bystander Intervention
- Identity Theft
- DUI Awareness
- Narcotics
- Gangs

And more.

If you are interested in scheduling any police training, please contact Lt. John Weinstein, at jweinstein@nvcc.edu or 571-422-9928, to arrange a convenient time.