Preventing Sexual Assault:
Be a Part of the Solution

One of the most challenging safety issues college campuses face is the prevention of sexual assaults and related crimes, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, dating partner violence, and stalking.

Authorities at all levels of government are addressing this important issue. The Violence Against Women Act and Title IX define unacceptable behaviors and mandate response guidelines. Furthermore, “It’s On Us”, a national awareness campaign designed to put an end to sexual assault on college campuses, was launched on September 19, 2014 by President Obama and Vice President Biden. This campaign (see http://itsonus.org) asks men and women to make a personal pledge to step off the sidelines and be part of the solution to eradicate campus sexual assault. Visit the campaign’s website to see celebrities advocating the pledge.

Here in Virginia, Governor McAuliffe empaneled a Task Force with representatives from all sectors of academia, to include deans, police, faculty, and campus administrators, to develop prevention and response strategies. The Task Force, which includes NOVA Police Chief Dan Dusseau, is due to issue its final report to the Governor in June.

NOVA is wholly committed to ensuring a safe learning and working environment. Toward this end, the College has expanded policies, with specific protections and well-defined administrative procedures; has increased faculty and staff training to deal with such crimes; provided informative articles in the Public Safety Newsletter; and provides on-line and in-person training through the NOVA academy, Sexual Assault Services, and the NOVA Police Department. NOVA Police have also increased formal training for officers. NOVA is also creating its own “It’s On Us” video, scheduled to premiere in March. The video consists of NOVA students encouraging others to become a part of the solution to this problem.

If a sexual assault does occur, the victim has several options for assistance. The victim, if an employee, can make a report to Human Resources or the Police. If the victim is a student, a report can be made to Sexual Assault Services, NOVA’s Title IX Coordinator, and/or the Police. In all circumstances, the victim’s confidentiality is protected to the extent possible, accommodations are made to protect the victim from further abuse, information is provided on where and how to get assistance, and the rights of the alleged suspect are guaranteed by explicit safeguards in NOVA’s administrative and legal investigatory and administrative processes.

NOVA Sexual Assault Services (SAS), a unit of the NOVA Cares Office, addresses sexual assault, stalking, and dating/partner violence against students by providing free confidential support and services to NOVA students, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. Besides offering telephone or in-person crisis intervention and support, SAS can accompany victims to police and/or court proceedings as well as to the hospital or academic meetings during and after such a crisis.

You may reach NOVA Police at 703-764-5000 and SAS at 703-338-0834 or 703-323-2406 (24/7). Both are available to help you 24 hours a day. You can email SAS at NOVA.SAS@nvcc.edu. Also, you may contact the Title IX administrator at 703-323-3266.
Statewide Tornado Drill on March 17th

On Tuesday March 17th at 9:45am, NOVA will participate in a Statewide Tornado Drill. This annual drill gives faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to practice going to a specified Severe Weather Shelter location. All faculty, staff, and students on campuses and off-campus locations are encouraged to participate.

At 9:45am, the National Weather Service will send a test tornado warning that will trigger a tone alert and broadcast its message on NOAA Weather Radios, which are located in various campus offices. The Office of Emergency Management will also use flat panel TVs, computer pop-ups, and telephone intercom systems (in offices and classrooms) to announce the start of the Drill.

When the test tornado warning is sounded, please follow NOVA’s Severe Weather/Tornado Procedures:

Severe Weather/Tornado

If the area is under a Tornado WARNING, direct students, staff and visitors to seek shelter immediately!

- Go IMMEDIATELY to:
  - The nearest Severe Weather Shelter Area OR
  - An appropriate area capable of providing protection from the event:
    - Hardened structure
    - Interior hallway or room free of windows or other glass structures
    - At the lowest level possible in the building – use stairs, NOT elevators
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck. Protect your body from flying debris with any available furniture or sturdy equipment.
- Do NOT open windows.
- Account for your co-workers and/or students and attempt to locate missing persons if safety permits.

The Statewide Tornado Drill will last for 10 minutes. At 9:55am, you may resume normal activities. Please remember to follow the directions of Building and Floor Wardens.

Please visit www.nvcc.edu/emergency to learn more about what you can do to protect yourself and others during severe weather and other hazards.

This month’s “Do 1 Thing” topic is: Sheltering

Find out how to respond safely at home when instructions are given to evacuate or take shelter. Visit http://do1thing.com to complete this month’s small step to be prepared.

If you haven’t completed “Do 1 Thing’s” small steps for January and February, you can still catch up! Visit http://do1thing.com or http://blogs.nvcc.edu/emergency/ to learn how.
Distracted Driving in Virginia

College is an exciting time, geared toward learning and gaining new experiences. Often times, younger college students are also learning how to become responsible drivers. With technology appearing everywhere you look, it is not surprising that such modern technology would find its way inside cars and into the hands of those operating them. Roadways are now flooded with drivers who are texting, checking email, and engaging in conversations, all while driving. Naturally, distracted driving poses major risks and, in some cases, has fatal consequences, not just for the driver but also for passengers and innocent bystanders. While some of these accidents result in fatalities, others result in severe injuries which cost thousands in missed work and lost pay and leave innocent people disabled.

Most activities that distract today’s drivers are common and may not seem unlawful or dangerous, but they are. Text messaging is the most dangerous activity a driver can do. Text messaging demands the use of manual, visual, and even cognitive abilities. When speaking with someone via cell phone, the driver’s primary focus shifts to the conversation, in turn reducing the driver’s cognitive abilities by 40%. Using a cell phone to text or even conduct social media tasks such as email and Facebook, jeopardizes the driver’s safety and sometimes life. Chances for experiencing a crash increase a whopping 23 times when visually operating a cell phone while driving.

Distracted driving isn’t just restricted to cell phone use; anything that causes the driver to take either his or her eyes or focus off the road is considered distracted driving. Many people would be surprised to learn just what is considered distracted driving. You don’t have to be typing out a message on a cell phone to be distracted; even simply drifting off into a daydream can decrease the brain’s ability to focus on the task of driving. Some other examples include texting, using a smart phone or cell phone, drinking and eating, conversing with other passengers, brushing hair and teeth (yes, this has happened), applying makeup, reading (even if it is a map), operating navigation equipment, watching movies, and operating a CD player, radio or other audio device. It is scary to consider we are sharing the roadways with drivers whose brains are only 60% focused on the task of driving. The fact that there are a growing number of distracted drivers makes activities, such as jogging and biking along campus, a potential risk.

Under Virginia code section § 46.2-1078.1, it is unlawful for any person to operate a moving motor vehicle on the highways in the Commonwealth while using any handheld personal communications device to:
1. Manually enter multiple letters or text in the device as a means of communicating with another person; or
2. Read any email or text message transmitted to the device or stored within the device, provided this prohibition shall not apply to any name or number stored within the device nor to any caller identification information. A violation of this section is a traffic infraction punishable, for a first offense, by a fine of $125 and, for second or subsequent offense, by a fine of $250.

Statistics are now reflecting just how dangerous distracted driving really is. Eight out of 10 vehicle accidents in Virginia are associated with a distracted driver who is texting while driving. In 2010, 3092 people died in a vehicle accident involving a distracted driver. Eleven per cent of all drivers under 20, who were involved in fatal car accidents, were found to have been distracted at the time of the accident.

There is no text message worth such pain, suffering, and personal ruin. The responsible course of action and best way to protect yourself and others while driving is to concentrate fully on operating your vehicle. Join the NOVA Police and Virginia State Police as we host a distracted driving demo at all campuses. Please see the list of dates and locations on the last page of this newsletter.
NOVA Police are hosting “how to stay safe” training sessions, college-wide. Training sessions will be offered during the day and evenings at each campus in accordance with the following schedule:

Please RSVP for this training. If you need to request accommodations, please e-mail Outreach Officer Tony Ong at tong@nvcc.edu or call 703-933-1850.

**Topics include:**
- NOVA safety resources and police services
- Personal safety tips
- Active shooter response overview
- And much more

**Dates and times:**
- March 30, Medical Education Campus, noon-1pm and 6 pm to 7 pm, Room 253
- March 16, Alexandria Campus, 6 pm to 7 pm, AA-158
- March 18, Annandale Campus, noon-1 pm in CN 213 and from 6 pm to 7 pm in CT 225

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**Distracted Driving Awareness Demo**

NOVA Police and Virginia State Police will host a Distracted Driving Awareness Demo at all campuses. This demo shows the potential deadly effects of distracting driving. Come join us and to test the effects of distracted driving has on you in a safe environment on our golf cart cone course.

**Dates and Locations:** *(event will be held from 11 am to 2:00 pm at each campus)*
- March 30, Woodbridge Campus (Seefeldt building exterior patio area)
- March 31, Annandale Campus (CG building plaza)
- April 01, Alexandria Campus (B-1 parking lot)
- April 02, Loudoun Campus (LC building side walk area)
- April 03, Medical Education Campus (Traffic circle)
- April 07, Manassas Campus (Howsmon patio area)

For more information or questions about our upcoming event, contact NOVA Police, Community Outreach Officer, Tony Ong at tong@nvcc.edu.

**How to Stay Safe on Campus** *(make-up dates)*

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