

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO
REPORTS OF MISSING STUDENTS

The term *missing student* shall refer to any Niagara University student living on campus who has not been seen by friends or associates in a reasonable length of time which may suggest that the absence is cause for concern or suspicion.

All reports of missing or suspected missing resident students should be reported to Campus Safety at university ext. 8111. Reports concerning missing commuters and off-campus students should be referred directly to law enforcement authorities. The Campus Safety Office will assist external authorities with these investigations as needed.

I. CAMPUS SAFETY OFFICE

A. Immediate Response

1. Campus Safety personnel will conduct a thorough and timely investigation with staff or the individual reporting a missing student to determine the whereabouts of the person.
2. Campus Safety immediately will begin to interview those close to the missing person (e.g., friends, roommates, family, residence staff, etc.) and other relevant associates. Particular attention will be given to possible locations of the missing student and his/her most recent mental state and/or personal problems.
3. When the missing student report is suspicious in nature, involves an immediate threat or any type of danger exists, Campus Safety immediately will notify the Campus Safety Director and summon law enforcement authorities by dialing 9-911; officers from the Lewiston Police, Niagara County Sheriff's Department or the New York State Police will be dispatched. The responding agency will ascertain the seriousness of the missing student report and act immediately to include, but not be limited to, interviews and coordination of search efforts.
4. The Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Campus Safety should be contacted immediately if a real or potential threat exists. When they are not available, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and/or Campus Safety Operations Supervisor, respectively, are to be contacted.
5. When law enforcement personnel arrive on campus, all university staff and students must cooperate with their investigation. Officers will be given access to telephone and fax at a central location. Campus Safety will assist authorities in identifying parties needed for questioning.
6. If police determine that a threat exists to the university community, Campus Safety will be responsible for posting notices on the grounds and in non-residential buildings. The Public Relations Director or designee will use the audix and e-mail systems to inform campus members.

B. Secondary Response

1. Campus Safety and the Dean of Student Affairs Office will communicate with each other regarding any new developments related to the missing person report; the dean will ensure that relevant parties are kept informed.
2. Information regarding the case will not be released publicly unless authorized by NU's Public Relations Director/designee. All media inquiries should be directed to Public Relations, ext. 8585.
3. Campus Safety should obtain written statements from all complainants/witnesses pertaining to the report and have them available for review by officials involved in the investigation.

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II. RESIDENCE LIFE STAFF

A. Immediate Response

1. Staff should notify Campus Safety immediately at university ext. 8111. The reporter must give a concise and accurate account of what has been observed. S/he should wait near a telephone for further instructions from Campus Safety or the Dean of Student Affairs Office.
2. When law enforcement officials are summoned to the residence hall, university personnel will cooperate fully with their investigation. The police have full authority to do room searches without warrants if they have witnessed a crime being committed and are in pursuit, or pursuant to a warrant. Any other requests by police to open rooms must have authorization from either the Dean of Student Affairs, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or the Director of Campus Safety. Staff must consult with one of the above named personnel before any rooms are opened or keys are given to the police.
3. Reports should be taken from any witnesses to the incident and delivered to the Dean of Student Affairs Office soon after the report is made.
4. If residents of the building involved are observed acting unusually concerned or irrationally, staff will consult with the Dean or Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and the residence hall's senior staff to develop strategies to assist the residents.

B. Secondary Response

1. All media inquiries should be directed to NU's Public Relations Office (ext. 8585). In the event that information needs to be disseminated to building residents, staff will be directed by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs to post updates or assemble the residents for a meeting.

III. DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE

A. Immediate Response

1. The dean will determine which personnel need to report and will summon them to campus.
2. In consultation with the Vice President for Student Life and Director of Campus Safety, the dean will determine if a potential threat to the university community exists.
3. If deemed necessary, warnings from the Public Relations Office, in consort with the Dean of Student Affairs, may be issued to the community, unless law enforcement believe that public notification may hinder their investigation. All releases will respect the privacy of victims, witnesses and the accused. The dean will keep relevant parties informed and may set up an information hot line (ext. 8564).
4. When police have determined that all leads to preliminarily locate the missing student have been exhausted and the whereabouts of the student remains unknown, the dean or designee will contact the student's parents/guardians. The Vice President for Student Life will inform the president.

B. Secondary Response

1. Upon return of the missing student, the Dean of Student Affairs will consult with the student due to concerns raised by their absence.
2. When the situation has been stabilized, the dean will coordinate internal and external information releases with NU's Public Relations Director or designee. Only the Public Relations Office may release details of the student's status to the media or other external parties.