

Students, Faculty and Staff,

Over the past week, two disparate incidents highlight the importance of communication timing and mechanisms in matters that can affect the health and safety of a college campus. At KCC, it is always our goal to have the campus open and accessible for learning to occur. A decision to close the campus is always significant and always scrutinized after it has been made. If any event occurs that compromises your safety and health the decision will be to close the campus.

Early last Thursday morning, there was a disruption of the electrical service to our campus. Upon investigation, it was determined that the cause of the failure was on our side of the demarcation point of service. Therefore, we were responsible to make repairs before service could be restored to the campus. We immediately called an electrical contractor to assess the length of time required to make the repairs. They estimated that they could complete the repairs by 1:30 p.m. With that assessment, we determined that, although inconvenient, the overall health and safety of the campus would not be compromised. We advised the Deans and Department chairs that the campus was open but the discretion to proceed with classes would be left to the individual faculty with the understanding that there are classes and situations where electricity is required. The same advisory was given to staff supervisors. The contractor was able to complete the repair work as promised and electricity was restored around 12:30 p.m.

Our local inconvenience was quickly contrasted by the Monday's deadly events at Virginia Tech University. While the scale of our campuses and magnitude of the events are nowhere comparable to each other, it seems that communication systems, decisions and timing are being highly criticized by the experts.

One thing we can learn from both events, is that communication is key. The message, timing and dissemination of information to students, faculty and staff are critical. We are reviewing our emergency preparedness plans to emphasize the importance of communications to all.

Leon Richards