

February 15, 2008

Message to the UConn family from President Mike Hogan



When I learned yesterday of the shootings on the campus of Northern Illinois University, I felt a rush of deep emotion as my heart went out immediately to the students and their families, and to everyone on the DeKalb campus – a place not far from Iowa City where I visited several times and knew colleagues and students who worked and studied there. I know I speak for everyone at the University of Connecticut when I express to President John Peters and to our fellow NIU students, faculty, and staff our deepest sympathy and compassion in this, perhaps their darkest hour. Our thoughts and our prayers are with the families and friends touched so suddenly and permanently by this unspeakable tragedy.

I have no explanation to offer to them that might somehow place this incident - and others equally tragic and devastating – in some coherent context. These acts of violent desperation remain inexplicable to me. They violate the core values of our universities and our society, and the beliefs that guide my own personal life.

Yet they are all too real. And because they are, I want to assure our UConn family – students and parents especially – that we are working hard and as rapidly as we can to improve our own security procedures and to take responsible, additional measures to protect those on our campuses from harm. We've already made significant changes since events that occurred last year at Virginia Tech. I encourage you to become familiar with the measures we've taken and the emergency procedures now in place on our campuses. Please visit our webpages to read about these measures at <http://www.president.uconn.edu/Alert.pdf>, and our University Alert Notification System, at <http://alert.uconn.edu/>

NIU posted memorial web pages immediately following the tragedy, with information about services, outreach to students and families, and official university announcements: <http://www.niu.edu/index.shtml> I've offered our assistance and support to NIU President John Peters, and I know that our entire UConn Husky family joins me in our sympathy and condolences to all who were touched by this tragedy. UConn staff members have already reached out to their counterparts at Northern Illinois. Also, I want to remind you that this tragedy in DeKalb may awaken memories or feelings of despair in some of us. I encourage you to seek the help of our Counseling Services <http://www.cmhs.uconn.edu> if you are experiencing feelings of distress or desperation. These are normal, expectable responses when a tragedy touches us personally, and we should not hesitate to care for ourselves at a difficult time. The Service's telephone is 860.486.4705

Mike Hogan, President