

Campus police installs new cameras, dead bolt locks

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FMU Campus Police and university officials added security cameras and upgraded locks to campus this spring to ensure the safety and protection of students and faculty.

FMU President Fred Carter said safety is key to the university. “

The single most important job that this board of trustees and board of administration has on this campus is making sure everybody is safe,” Carter said.

FMU contracted Technology Solutions of Charleston, S.C. to install 70 iPoint security cameras in each academic building and other buildings in which students congregate. University officials expect the project to be done by the end of March.

FMU Chief of Police Donald Tarbell said that camera footage can be monitored at any time, and recordings are kept for a month so that officers can play camera recordings when needed. Tarbell said that the cameras will deter people from committing crimes, and in cases when crimes are committed, officers can more accurately identify suspects.

“Just the other night one of our dispatchers noticed a student who was visibly sick,” Tarbell said. “Without us even getting a phone call, we were able to send an officer over there to check on the student. These cameras help us do our job and keep the students safe here on campus.”

Tarbell said cameras have always been a necessity for campus, but they had to prioritize where to put cameras first. Housing received cameras because that is where students spend their time, and when money was available, university officials began adding them to the rest of campus.

FMU also added four more emergency sirens to campus, expanding the reach of the siren system to each corner of campus, added more dispatchers and campus police officers received more training and armament to prepare them for emergency situations.

According to Carter, there is not a government budget to pay for campus security.

“The state does not actually appropriate any money for these,” Carter said. “We have got to take a little money at a time to set it aside to deal with each one of these issues. This was money we thought would be more essential for security purposes than for some other purposes.”

The campus security upgrades are a part of a continuing goal of a more secure campus.

Tarbell said he looks at incidents from other campuses as well as good security practices at other universities to help show officers what they can do to improve the campus security.

Carter said that the university continues to pursue other measures to ensure the safety of the FMU faculty and staff.

“I do believe that in the case of an emergency, our officers are well prepared to ensure the safety of our students and faculty,” Carter said.

In mid-January, FMU Campus Police joined with nine other law enforcement organizations to discuss the security upgrades and continuing the partnership with FMU’s police force.

Carter said the partnership with community law enforcement agencies is a mutual assistance agreement.

Campus Police partners with law enforcement divisions such as the Florence County Sheriff's Department and the FBI.