

- "January 14, 2011"

Posted by gavazzi.1

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*"The way to be safe is never to be secure."* (Benjamin Franklin)

Hello everyone,

My second week on campus is drawing to a close, and I am even more excited and encouraged with respect to what I have been finding out about OSU Mansfield. While faculty, staff, students, and our community members certainly are sensitive to a number of strengths that already have been identified publicly and convincingly, I am becoming more and more aware of many additional stories of distinction that have yet to be told about our great and growing campus... so stay tuned!

That said, I would like to take a moment to reflect on a more somber issue. Our flags have been flying at half staff throughout this week in commemoration of the recent tragic loss of life in Arizona. The early reports out on the motivations behind this heinous act have reflected a hodgepodge of guesses and presumptions that, in turn, have sparked quite a bit of deliberation and discussion. Even a cursory glance at this week's editorials and columns reveals conversations on a wide variety of topics that touch upon everything from mental health issues to the incendiary nature of political discourse. The fact that we can debate such matters as part of our being a free and open society is something to cherish and encourage. This is especially so on campuses here in Ohio and across the country, befitting the leading role that higher education should play in such national conversations.

At the same time, however, these types of events are clear reminders of the ever-present need to pay attention to issues surrounding public safety. It should be noted that I have been immensely impressed with our own campus security efforts. And while it certainly can be said that we live and work in a well-protected setting because of the efforts of such dedicated professionals as Sergeant James Sweat and Thomas Rooks, these same individuals would agree that there is no such thing as a completely safe environment. In fact, law enforcement officials themselves must remain ever vigilant, as evidenced by the recent shooting death of State Trooper Suzanne Hopper. For these reasons, I wanted to take the time this week to remind you that public safety is the responsibility of each and every one of us. So take the time to do the right things. Lock your cars, and remind others to do the same. Find partners to walk with when it starts to get dark. Be aware of your surroundings. And when you see something – anything – that just doesn't look right, put in a call to campus security. It is always, always, always better to be safe than sorry.

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On a brighter note, I believe that all of this can be viewed as part of a much larger picture, one that allows you to see OSU Mansfield as your campus. For when you see our campus in this way, you will invest yourself more heavily in what transpires here. And as a direct result, you undoubtedly will contribute to the overall well-being of everyone. In all honesty, I felt that exact surge of pride, that sense of this being my campus, as early as my second day here. And happily, that is a feeling that keeps growing with each passing week.

So be safe out there, invest yourself in our campus, and please enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi