

Emergency pillars in need for UNM Gallup campus

Written by By Chrissy Largo Sun Correspondent
Friday, 30 October 2015 05:04



At the conclusion of the UNM-Gallup Advisory Board's Oct. 27 meeting, members were given an earful as, local student, Lyndsey Toddy, read a letter aloud detailing an incident that occurred last month along the school's one-mile running trail.

In the letter, a female student who chooses to remain anonymous, described how she went on a run around noon time only to be confronted by two men that emerged from the nearby bushes.

According to the letter, it stated, "These men seemed like they weren't students and honestly, they scared me and I got an uneasy feeling. I was all alone. I didn't have my pepper spray and I was so tired from running the trail, I wasn't sure if I could depend on myself if they decided to attack me."

Toddy, also runs the trail with the schools running club, voiced his concern and wanted to know if the board members had any ideas on how to address the problem.

"It is just really troubling to see females go for runs out there and there is one officer on duty and one officer at night," Toddy said. "We will have to get more funding for three or four more officers,"

When asked by Board Chairman Ralph Richards if the unknown female filed an incident report with campus security, the response was "no."

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“You can’t wait 30 days,” he said. “I know that there are sensitive issues that some people don’t want to discuss because they might be intimidated but we have to have immediate response.”

The discussion led to the possibility of the school purchasing blue emergency pillars, at approximately \$12,000 per unit, as a safety precaution to be placed in designated areas around the school’s campus.

But, it was stated that funding for these units is an issue.

“The one thing that faculty and staff can relate to this is that I don’t think that anybody really knows what to do. It is a matter of ‘when’ and ‘if’ scenarios,” said Olin Kieyoomia, vice president of the Board. “There is a big advocacy program on the main campus about campus safety, but we don’t get that end of it.”

The LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center recently opened at the UNM main campus on Sept. 25, which provides students a safe place to receive support in various areas such as sexual harassment, according to the UNM main campus website.

However, implementing major safety efforts such as an advocacy center at the UNM Gallup campus are still in discussion for now.

In efforts to ensure the students safety, Marketing and Communications Officer Marilee Petranovich discussed the recent creation of a safety and emergency communication plan for the school.

“We talked about anything from putting two-way radios in strategic places around campus, all the way down to putting stickers on phones with emergency numbers on it,” she said. “It is an active ongoing project going on right now. In the event of a crisis, we would be able to go right to that [plan] and know exactly what to do.”

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Within the following two upcoming board meetings, the board requested that updated information is presented by the safety police officers on campus.