

## NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2023](#) / [November](#) / President Kelly Shares Incident Update, Thanks PolicePRESIDENT KELLY SHARES INCIDENT UPDATE, THANKS  
POLICEby [Jim Hanchett](#) | November 28, 2023*Read time: about 2 min*

*Editor's note: Tuesday afternoon, Christopher Newport University President William G. Kelly shared the following message with the campus community:*

Dear Captains,

This has been a difficult day that has underlined the challenges we face as a community and the strengths we bring to the task.

Let me begin by asking you to join me in thanking the brave and quick-thinking officers of the Christopher Newport University Police Department and the actions of our Residence Life Staff. Our Police Department de-escalated the situation before any member of our community could be harmed. They then worked quickly, calling on years of experience and training, to determine that there was no continuing threat to the campus. We are made safer because we can count on the outstanding 24/7 efforts of Police Chief Dan Woloszynowski, a highly regarded leader in the field, and the exceptional men and women of the Police Department. Thank you as well to the Newport News Police Department for their assistance.

To help with our understanding of what happened, let me lay out some details. Some information can't be shared because it cannot be confirmed or must remain confidential to protect the criminal investigation.

3:06 AM - University Police responded to a report of a disturbance in James River Residence Hall initiated by a

person who had accompanied a visitor and was signed in as a guest of a resident. That disturbance included the activation of a fire alarm.

3:17 AM - As our Police were at James River, students called the dispatch center, reporting they had heard what they believed to be gunfire in the vicinity of the David Student Union.

3:20 AM - Within approximately three minutes, officers responded to the DSU and reported they had both the person and the firearm in custody. The person in custody was determined not to be a member of the University. First responders immediately took thorough, comprehensive steps to confirm there was no indication of an ongoing threat to campus.

4:04 AM - This message was sent out through the [CNU Alert](#) notification system; "CNU Police responded to a report of gunshots on campus. No known threat to the community at this time. Gun and individual are in custody."

4:19 AM - A more specific alert was pushed out to campus directing recipients to avoid the DSU.

4:42 AM - A third alert specifically requested that people avoid the DSU north eating area portico. Both of the follow-up messages reiterated that there was no known continuing threat to the University.

5:15 AM - Emergency Operation Center (EOC) was activated.

5:34 AM - In consultation with the Emergency Policy Group (EPG), I determined the University would open and classes would be held as scheduled.

We must prepare for moments like this and we do. Our Emergency Policy Group and Emergency Management Teams represent key offices across campus and they meet monthly to review procedures. They have met twice already today. Just within the last month, many of them underwent extensive training in how to respond to on-campus emergencies.

What happens next?

- Please take a moment to review your own preparedness. If you didn't receive the alerts, please be sure to sign up/confirm your registration with [CNUAlert.info](#).
- Thanks to the efforts of our Dining Services, Facilities Management and Plant Operations staff, Regattas is reopening for dinner and I look forward to seeing you there. Earlier today, I visited The Commons, James River Hall, and several other campus locations.
- Tomorrow morning at 6:30 AM, I will lead a Wednesday Walk with the President, beginning at the fountain in the plaza. Look for more on that in another email later today.
- We will share updates on the criminal investigation on our website at this link.
- In the coming days, we will review how the University handled the incident and look for ways to improve our response.

It is not business as usual. Many of you were frightened and had to experience a sleepless night of worry and [support services are available](#). Our heroic Police Officers were tested and had to make split-second decisions. Someone was hurt. A building was damaged. Our beautiful campus can seem like a sanctuary, always safe from the forces that darken the outside world. On most days and nights, it is just that. But when we do experience something ugly and menacing, we are protected by our Police and comforted by the countless ways we demonstrate through word and action how much we mean to each other. It's what Captains do and I am deeply grateful.

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