Dear New Students:

Last week this email was sent to your families to provide an update on safety measures at the University of Minnesota. Today, we want to reach out to share additional details.

Your safety and the safety of the University community is of utmost importance. Many factors contribute to feeling safe on campus, including physical safety and emotional safety. We want to ensure that you are able to learn and grow in environments that are free from harassment, discrimination, and threats to your safety and wellbeing, while also providing spaces where you can connect with and receive support from your friends and colleagues.

After President Gabel’s May 27 message about how the University will work with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), we have received questions about how safety has changed or might change both on and off-campus. We want to provide information and context about how these changes impact our community. While the University will no longer use MPD for two specialized services for University events (specifically K-9 Explosive detection units and additional law enforcement support needed for large events), collaboration continues between Minneapolis and UMPD to provide emergency response to the University community.

The University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) is housed within the Department of Public Safety, and is responsible for the Twin Cities campus. The University’s department currently has 53 fully trained and sworn police officers to serve students and the University community. The area surrounding the Twin Cities campus is under MPD’s jurisdiction.

To provide more of an idea of what safety looks like on campus, UMPD’s work is supplemented by public safety staff that include approximately 70 student security monitors, approximately 10 adult security advisors, and 23 Public Safety Emergency Communications Center staff working in the University’s 911 dispatch office and monitoring more than 3,000 cameras. Additionally, it is important to note that Public Safety works closely with Minneapolis, St. Paul and other neighboring public safety departments to respond or receive additional support as needed.

There are additional safety services available on campus like SafeWalk, the 24/7 official escort services for anyone who may need or like an escort near campus. For those students living on campus, all doors leading to residence hall rooms and apartments are locked 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Access to these areas requires a key or activated U Card/fob that is issued to residents when they check in at the beginning of the year.

We invite you and your family to find more information on the campus Public Safety website, including descriptions of how and when safety alerts are sent to students, staff, faculty and
others who have signed up to receive them. There are many additional resources available in the Office for Equity and Diversity.

Separate from the University, the City of Minneapolis is discussing how to re-imagine and create a new public safety system that better serves our Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color. These changes will require extensive consultation. Senior leaders at the University are in regular communication with the city on this topic to ensure that we are contributing to these conversations and are aware of how potential changes will affect our community.

Please know that the safety of the University community is an ongoing and top priority. We will continue to support our community and work to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and safe at the University.

Sincerely,

Michael Berthelson, Vice President, University Services
Maggie Towle, Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students