As you may already know, a number of members of the Columbia community were assaulted late Saturday evening near campus. I am writing to update you on the status of this investigation and to inform you of some important Public Safety services that are available to you. With respect to the investigation, one of the suspects was apprehended that night after being identified by a witness. At this point, we believe that all of these assaults were committed by the same group of young men over an approximately 50 minute period. Our video security system has provided the police and public with essential information in the investigation. We are, therefore, hopeful that additional arrests will be made shortly.

In the meantime, I would like to remind you of some important things that our Department of Public Safety has been doing to maintain the security and well being of our University community.

First of all, uniformed Public Safety personnel are stationed at fixed locations throughout the Morningside area and on the uptown Medical Center campus. These include guard booths at the main gates on 116th Street at both Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, which are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These posts are supplemented by foot, bicycle and motorized patrols that provide a highly visible presence in the areas around both campuses. In recent months, we have increased our foot and motorized patrols throughout the area.

All of our undergraduate residences are staffed by Public Safety personnel or trained student aides who control access to these buildings on a 24 hour basis. All students and visitors are screened.

We also operate two 24-hour emergency operations centers, one on each campus. On the Morningside campus, we can be reached in an emergency by dialing 212-854-5555 on any phone. For routine business, you can reach us by calling 212-854-2797. At the Medical Center, the emergency response number is 212-305-7979.

There is also an extensive system of video cameras that we use to investigate crimes. In addition, emergency call boxes, that connect directly to our 24 hour operations centers, are installed in strategic locations across both campuses and surrounding areas.

Continued on next page
Last year we introduced a text messaging system which can be used to transmit emergency messages to portable devices such as cell phones. Initially, the service was available only to the student body. This year, it was made available to faculty and staff, as well.

Finally, we have a staff of highly trained investigators who work hand in hand with the N.Y.P.D. to investigate matters that relate to the Columbia campuses. We are in daily contact with the 26th Precinct detectives.

We also employ a number of Crime Prevention Initiatives of which not everyone may be aware. For example, we operate a Morningside Heights shuttle service that provides scheduled service throughout the Morningside campus area during the evening hours, between 7:00 P.M. and 11:00 P.M. Thereafter, this shuttle service offers on-call service between 11:00 P.M. and 2:00 A.M. daily. This service ranges as far south as 103rd Street and as far north as 135th Street. Resources permitting, we supplement this service with patrol vehicles. Last semester we added an additional point to point shuttle vehicle which operates between the hours of 10 P.M. and 6 A.M.

We also offer an escort service where trained students will accompany you to your door any time from 7:00 P.M. until 3:00 A.M. This service is available between 108th Street and 122nd Street. At the Medical Center, escorts are available between W. 165th Street and W. 181st Street. For this service, call 212-854-SAFE on the Morningside Campus and 212-305-8100 on the Medical Center Campus.

Additionally, Operation “Safe Haven” provides 65 storefront locations across both campuses where people who may feel threatened can take refuge. The merchants will call Public Safety and/or the N.Y.P.D. who will respond immediately. Look for the “Red Lion” sticker in the window of the store.

Finally, we are sponsoring a ‘Street Smarts’ seminar on Wednesday, October 29th, at 6 P.M. in Jerome Green Hall, Room 103. This seminar will feature important crime prevention presentations from members of Public Safety and the N.Y.P.D. All are invited to attend.

The Department of Public Safety is here to keep you safe. We look forward to working together with all of you to keep our environment secure. I encourage anyone with a concern to contact Public Safety at 212-854-2797, day or night. For more information about Public Safety and the services we provide, please also see our annual Security Report online at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/publicsafety/SecurityReport.pdf.