Dear Members of the Columbia Community,

In recent weeks, the Department of Public Safety has received numerous reports regarding the larceny of unattended property across campus. Individuals have reported thefts of wallets, laptops, cell phones, electronics and other items. Although this increase in stolen property is unfortunate, it is important to note that these are preventable crimes.

I am writing to share with you some of the things you can do to protect your valuables and to tell you about some of the programs we have in place to help safeguard your personal property.

PRECAUTIONS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY

Theft is the most common crime on college campuses. Following these simple, common-sense precautions can substantially decrease your chances of becoming a victim of larceny:

- Keep your doors and windows locked whenever leaving your room or office.
- Don’t leave valuables unattended, even for short periods of time. In particular, don’t ever walk away from your laptop computer, even for a minute.
- When recharging small devices in public spaces, e.g., smart phones, i-pads, keep them within arm’s length. Do NOT attempt to recharge an i-Phone in a public area and leave it unattended. It is unlikely to be there when you return.
- Lock your bicycle with a sturdy lock, weaving it through frame, spokes, and rack. (Public Safety sells bike locks at a discount.)
- Report thefts or suspicious activities to Public Safety immediately.

PROGRAMS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Department of Public Safety has a number of free programs to help you protect your property. We encourage you to take advantage of them. For more information or to register for any of these programs, contact Assistant Director for Crime Prevention Programs Ricardo Morales at rm29@columbia.edu or 212-854-8513.

Continued on next page
Operation ID: Property is marked with an indelible, inconspicuous, specially assigned number.

Operation Blue Light: Property is marked with an invisible ink discernible only under a special blue light.

PC PhoneHome/Mac PhoneHome: Helps authorities locate a lost or stolen computer by identifying its location when the machine is connected to the Internet.

“Stop Theft” Tags: Property is tagged with a unique ID number that is entered into the STOP-THEFT worldwide database. This facilitates lost or stolen property being reunited with its owner.

Bicycle Registration: A unique ID number is applied to the bicycle and registered with the NYPD and a permanent decal is affixed to the bicycle.

Auto VIN Etching: Unique vehicle identification numbers (VIN) are etched into car windows to deter theft and make it easier to trace the vehicle if it is stolen.

Anti-Theft Locking Devices: Public Safety sells bike locks, computer locks and car locks at cost.

Education and Awareness: Crime prevention information is offered to the University community throughout the year through seminars, workshops, crime alerts, newsletters and other literature. For more information about public safety and crime prevention, you can review the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report which is available online at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/publicsafety/SecurityReport.pdf.

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS:

On the Morningside Campus, we can be reached in an emergency by dialing 212-854-5555 on any phone.

At the Medical Center, the emergency response number is 212-305-7979.

Thieves frequently target college campuses and surrounding areas due to the population concentration and the tendency to leave valuables unprotected. Through increased vigilance and awareness, we can reduce larceny and other crimes on campus. We look forward to working with you to maintain a safe and open campus environment.

James McShane
Vice President for Public Safety