

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GOUCHER'S CCTV CAMERA POLICY

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### **Why is the college proposing to install cameras now?**

Many college campuses have video cameras, including very small campuses like Goucher's, and all of the colleges in the immediate geographic area, including Towson, Stevenson, Loyola and McDaniel; these cameras are used for purposes of enhancing safety, deterring and investigating crime, and protecting college property. Students and their parents have come to expect heightened sensitivity to these issues, in light of recent publicity surrounding criminal events on other campuses. Because the college is also embarking on major construction projects within the next few years, now is the ideal time to take a comprehensive look at college safety, and make these plans with campus security needs in mind.

### **How do cameras work?**

Cameras located around campus send live video to the password-protected monitoring stations for review by authorized and trained public safety staff. The video would be simultaneously recorded and archived to provide supporting evidence during the investigation of an incident.

### **Who watches the cameras and who can view recorded material?**

Cameras would not be monitored in real time 24 hours a day, seven days a week; however the college would reserve the right to do so with respect to any particular camera or cameras. The viewing of live video may occur if needed for legitimate safety and security purposes, such as surveilling an area in which a pattern of crime has been observed or reasonable suspicion of criminal activity exists.

Recorded material will be viewed at the discretion of the Director of Public Safety (or designee) and only for the purpose of enhancing safety, deterring and investigating crime, and protecting college property. No one other than trained public safety staff may operate the system or view footage without express permission from the Director of Public Safety.

### **Where are the cameras located and will people be notified that a given area is being monitored?**

It is proposed that locations for the installation of CCTV cameras would be determined by the Director of Public Safety, based upon a data-driven need at a specific location. Consideration would be given to crime trends and the potential for criminal activity, and installation feasibility and costs. All decisions would be made in consultation with the Director of Facilities Management Services, the Vice President for Information Technology, and the Risk Management Committee, to ensure that planned technologies are appropriate and feasible as proposed.

Information about camera placement would be disseminated to the community in advance of installation to obtain input about proposed locations. The Director, in consultation with the

above individuals and committee, would weigh the privacy concerns of member(s) of the community expressed through this process, against the safety, security and crime prevention value of particular camera(s). The Director's decision would be final.

Signage would be installed alerting community members to general locations of cameras on campus.

### **Will cameras be placed in parking lots and at the campus entrance gate?**

A priority for camera placement is the front gate and parking lots, as many who responded to the survey have requested. We believe these placements will help public safety better monitor the traffic into and out of the college, and will enhance the college's ability to deter crime on campus.

### **Under what circumstances will covert cameras be used on campus?**

Covert CCTV equipment is defined in the policy as a camera that is hidden from normal view or otherwise secreted away. The policy provides that covert equipment must be authorized by the President, the Vice President and Dean of Students, and the General Counsel, and is to be used only in connection with suspected criminal activity or violation of college policy. The use of covert or hidden CCTV equipment will be conducted by law enforcement officers or public safety staff in compliance with federal, state and local laws. In addition, no covert cameras will be used in a location in which an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy unless such use is authorized by a court or unless the resident of the space provides written permission for installation of such cameras. For example, if repeated acts of vandalism occur in an area that is not covered by overt cameras, a covert camera may be installed to identify the perpetrator. However, covert cameras would not be installed inside a private residence hall room without a court order, or the permission of the resident.

### **Will cameras be used inside of residence halls and in classrooms?**

The immediate priority for the placement of cameras is at the front gate and at residence hall entrances. Although OneCard readers provide a record of entrances and exits, many times individuals enter the residence halls by following an authorized individual, but are not themselves authorized to enter the building. This extra layer of security would be helpful in deterring unauthorized individuals from entering the buildings and in conducting investigations when crimes occur in residence halls. Cameras will not be used in private areas of residence halls, such as communal bathrooms or individual rooms, but may be used in areas such as laundry rooms and stairwells.

Similarly, the priority for academic and administrative buildings will be to install cameras at building entrances, though cameras may also be used in certain interior areas where valuable property is located, for example. Cameras are not currently planned for classrooms, though cameras may be used if the need arises, for example, in case of repeated vandalism in a classroom.

Except in emergencies, the risk management committee will approve all camera placements. Appropriate signage will be used and the community will be informed of the general locations of all overt cameras prior to installation.

**What assurances can you give us that our privacy is not going to be invaded?**

Public safety staff will be trained in the legal and ethical issues of camera use. Officers will be trained that they are not to track individuals unless there is reason to suspect the individual is a threat to people or property. “Profiling” of individuals based on protected characteristics such as race and ethnicity, would be prohibited. Except in very limited circumstances described in the policy, the scope of camera coverage does not allow for surveillance of the interior of individual residence hall rooms or other private areas. If anyone has reason to suspect misuse of the camera system, he or she should report it immediately to the Director of Public Safety, the Vice President and Dean of Students, or the General Counsel for investigation and appropriate action.

**Could students or employees be subject to disciplinary action based on observations made on video?**

Yes. The system would not be designed to monitor individuals who do not threaten people or property, and is not intended for use by supervisors to monitor employees on the job. However, cameras may be used to investigate certain incidents, including those that relate to personal injury to students, employees or visitors, or damage to or loss of College property.

**If I am involved in an incident, can I view the video recordings?**

Any video evidence that would be collected is subject to the same policies of the college that govern any other type of evidence gathered by the Office of Public Safety. For example, in the course of an investigation, a witness may be asked to view specific recordings in order to identify a suspect. As another example, if the video is used in a student judicial process, the student respondent may be entitled to review the video, subject to FERPA. Any other requests to review videos, including those from outside authorities, must be submitted in writing to the Director of Public Safety for consideration; these requests would be reviewed by the General Counsel.

**Who decides how long the camera recordings are kept and who has access to them?**

The policy provides that video recordings shall be retained by the Office of Public Safety for a period of thirty days, and may be retained for a longer period at the direction of the Director of Public Safety and the General Counsel if they are to be used for a criminal investigation or court proceedings, or other bona fide use. If recordings are used for purposes of a student code of conduct proceeding, students would have the right to view such recordings subject to the provisions of FERPA. Requests to view or obtain a copy of recordings for other purposes will be reviewed by the General Counsel and Director of Public Safety. Recordings will be made available for official college and law enforcement purposes, only if necessary to enhance personal safety, deter and investigate crime, and protect college property. The suggestion has been made that a committee make decisions regarding the retention and release of specific records; the risk

management committee determined that such a process would be cumbersome to administer, and could compromise the confidential nature of the recordings.

**To whom should I address questions and concerns?**

Questions and concerns about camera usage and placement, or other issues related to the camera policy, should be addressed to the Director of Public Safety, the Vice President and Dean of Students and/or the General Counsel.