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FOR RELEASE

UK President Announces Initiatives to Improve Women's Safety

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Sept. 29, 2004) – University of Kentucky President Lee T. Todd Jr. today announced eight new safety initiatives the university will implement this academic year to improve the safety of women on campus. The programs were developed in response to findings from a victimization survey conducted at UK with 1,010 female graduate and undergraduate students.

“We will never make gains toward becoming a top-20 public research institution if our students are unsafe or if they lack a sense of physical security,” said Todd. “It is part of our fundamental mission, then, to create a campus that provides a safe place to live, to work, and to learn.”

The study, conducted by the UK Center for Research on Violence Against Women, measured the prevalence of victimization among female students, their fear of crime, university response, and related items. Carol Jordan, director of the center, released the findings of the study.

“While the rate of victimization of female students at UK appears to mirror that of other universities, we believe that too many women know the experience of rape, stalking and physical assault,” said Jordan. “When asked if they had ever experienced an incident of victimization while at UK, 36.5 percent of women answered yes. The study also found that the most common type of offender was an acquaintance or intimate of the victim. While most women fear attack by a stranger, our risk reduction efforts must also educate them that known offenders pose a greater risk.”

Todd was joined by his wife Patsy in announcing the new safety programs to address findings from the study. Patsy Todd said, “It is important for students and

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parents to know that we are already a safe university, but that we will work harder than any other educational institution to make certain women don't feel afraid and certainly to reduce the chance that any woman will experience harm."

New safety programs announced today include:

- Creation of UK Women's Place, a central point of contact for coordinating victim services, education and prevention programs, training, and other efforts related to improving the safety and well-being of UK's women. UK Women's Place will be funded through a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Creation of a cell phone lending program called C.A.T.S. phones (Campus Area Telephone for Safety) that will make free wireless phones donated by Verizon Wireless available to students
- Creation of a state-of-the-art police training program conducted in partnership with the Kentucky State Police, the Lexington-Fayette Division of Police, UK Police Department, UK Athletics, the Center for Research on Violence Against Women, and Verizon Wireless
- Creation of a self-defense program for university and community women designed by UK Police called the S.T.A.R.R. program (Self Defense Techniques and Risk Reduction Training)
- Expansion of a series of campus-wide brown bags on women's safety hosted by the UK Women's Forum
- Creation of two specialized education programs for students
- Review of the Student Code of Conduct to explore use of the campus judicial system for assault cases between students that occur off campus.

In a final announcement, Todd formed a Women's Safety Advisory Group to evaluate implementation of the new programs and to make further recommendations to him regarding the safety of women and all members of the UK community. In closing, Todd said, "Violence against women will remain a priority in the research and education agenda of the university, and that priority will be felt on every sidewalk, in every dorm, and in every classroom across this campus."

For more information about the new safety initiatives, go to www.rgs.uky.edu/crvaw.

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Participating in the news conference:

Dr. Lee T. Todd, Jr., UK President
Patsy B. Todd, UK First Lady
Carol E. Jordan, Director, UK Center for Research on Violence Against Women
Michelle Gilbert, Public Relations, Verizon Wireless
Lt. Col. Dean Hays, Kentucky State Police
Assistant Chief Ulysses Berry, Lexington-Fayette Division of Police
Ernest Yanarella, Chair, UK Faculty Senate
Jim Ryder, Maintenance Technician, UK Physical Plant Division
Rachel Watts, President, UK Student Government
Pat Terrell, UK Vice President for Student Affairs
Chief Fred Otto, UK Police Department
Dean Carol Diedrichs, UK Dean of Libraries
Tammie Disco, UK Women's Forum
Mitch Barnhart, Director, UK Athletics

Also present were:

Michael T. Nietzel, UK Provost
Wendy Baldwin, UK Executive Vice President for Research
Michael Karpf, UK Executive Vice President for Health Affairs
Frank Butler, UK Acting Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
Dorothy Brockopp, Chair, UK President's Commission on Women