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TO: The Chair and Members of the President's Ad Hoc Committee  
On A Civil, Safe and Open Environment, and  
The Members of the University of Florida Community

FROM: J. Bernard Machen



I want to thank the chair and members of the President's Ad Hoc Committee on a Civil, Safe and Open Environment for their service to the University of Florida over the last six months. Professor Kim Tanzer, Chair; Professor Sandra Chance; Professor James Klausner; Professor Mark Rush; Professor Michael Seigel; Mr. Brian Aungst, student member; Ms. Lola Bovell, student member; Mr. Steven Hoffstetter, student member; and Ms. Leslie Jean, student member should be recognized for the objectivity, integrity and thought that they applied to the critical questions I posed to them. After a student was Tasered at an ACCENT event featuring Senator John Kerry earlier this academic year, I convened the Committee to advise me on forward-looking policies that would support safety and openness on campus.

I asked the Committee to recommend what the University of Florida should do to foster a secure environment in which our 50,000 students and 20,000 faculty and staff can live and work safely, while also protecting the free speech interests that are so fundamental to this University and all great academic institutions.

Having received and reviewed the Committee's report with care, I accept the Committee's 16 recommendations. Among other things, the recommendations:

- Highlight the importance of individual behavior and responsibility for an open, orderly and safe campus;
- Call for training the UF community on free speech interests to raise awareness;
- Find that the revised student event management policies appropriately foster security and the First Amendment by calling for escalating responses to disruptions at events, with the police intervening only when needed, and requiring training for event managers and the UF Police Department in protecting both safety and free speech interests;
- Find that the revised UF Police Department policy on the use of Tasers is more restrictive than state law and the prior policy, and reflects an appropriate use and limitation on use of the Taser as an intermediate weapon on campus; and
- Suggest that UFPD ensure transparency and accountability on the use of force by reporting annually on its web page and to the Faculty and Student Senates.

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The Committee's report reflects a thorough and thoughtful review of many complex issues and different perspectives involved in appropriately balancing safety and openness. The members should be commended for their objectivity and intellectual diligence. The Committee considered policies of our peers, obtained expert guidance for their review of research on the effects of Tasers and the relative effects of Tasers and other intermediate weapons, and heard from experts in First Amendment speech rights, security, law enforcement, medical and policy concerns relevant to Tasers, events management, and student affairs. The members rejected preconceptions and undertook the hard research necessary to determine the facts on which sound recommendations must be based.

I urge the entire UF community to read this report and commit my Administration to implementing its recommendations. The report is available at [www.president.ufl.edu](http://www.president.ufl.edu) through the link to the Ad Hoc Committee on a Civil, Safe and Open Environment.