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From: VT News [mailto:vtnews@vt.edu]

Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 5:14 PM

To: VT News

Subject: MEDIA ADVISORY: Letter from Virginia Tech President Charles Steger to university community regarding today's events

Note to editors: the following is an open statement send to the university community by President Charles W. Steger regarding today's tragedy in Montgomery County.

August 27, 2009

To the University Community,

It is with great sorrow that I write to you about an off-campus tragedy involving Virginia Tech students. The Montgomery County Sheriff has confirmed that two Virginia Tech students were the victims of a homicide sometime last night. They were found early this morning by a passerby near the Caldwell Fields area of northern Montgomery County, a popular day use area within the Jefferson Forest, about 12-15 miles from campus. Both were victims of gunshot wounds.

The Montgomery County Sheriff has notified families and subsequently announced the victims as David Metzler, 19, a sophomore in industrial and systems engineering from Lynchburg and Heidi Childs, 18, a sophomore in biochemistry from Forest, Virginia. The sheriff's office continues its investigation and search for a suspect. Any who feels that they might have knowledge related to this should contact the sheriff at 540-382-2951.

The dean of student's office will assist the families where appropriate. We have no knowledge at this time of memorials or a memorial services, but will post information once approved by the families on the university website.

Trauma like this is deeply painful to us all. Once again, this community is visited by senseless violence and tragedy upon aspiring young minds from our campus. I know that many of you likely have complex feelings about now. How can this happen in this area, at this time, to this community? I urge you to counsel your colleagues and fellow students and to seek help if at all necessary. Individuals or groups with special needs are encouraged to contact the Cook Counseling Center at 231-6557.

We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families and will assist in any way possible. No amount of words can counteract their grief, but know that the university administration and everyone within this community intensely feels this pain.

Very sincerely yours,

Charles W. Steger