News

A sign that says "The Catholic University of America founded 1887 In Service to Church and N

Metropolitan Police Department personnel are seen Dec. 10, 2019, on the campus of The Catholic University of America in Washington. The Catholic University of America has requested emergency meetings with Metropolitan Police, following off-campus attacks July 13 and July 17, 2023, days after a Kentucky teacher was killed in front of a university building. (OSV News photo/Tyler Orsburn)

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The Catholic University of America has requested emergency meetings with Washington police following two recent off-campus attacks that occurred in the days after the killing of a beloved Kentucky teacher during an apparent robbery that took place in front of a university building.

In a July 18 statement, Catholic University said it had contacted the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department's Fourth and Fifth Districts "to address the serious concerns we have about the crime that has occurred just footsteps away from our campus."

The university noted its department of public safety July 17 received a report of a fatal shooting that took place sometime prior to 9:45 p.m near Monroe and 7th Streets in the district's Northeast quadrant. It was unknown if either the victim or the suspect -- who was armed and fled toward the nearby Metro station -- had any connection to the university, according to the university's statement.

The university also learned July 17 that a recent graduate had been violently assaulted July 13 at approximately 4:45 p.m. The victim was attacked by a group of suspects while walking from the Metro station to his off-campus residence.

Both incidents followed the July 5 murder of Maxwell Emerson, 25, a high school teacher from Kentucky who was in Washington at the time to attend a professional development workshop at the Library of Congress. Emerson was slain outside of the university's Father O'Connell Hall after 8 a.m. that day, with portions of the incident -- preceded by an apparent robbery attempt -- captured on surveillance video.

Suspect Jaime Maceo (also known as Jaime Macedo) was arrested in connection with the killing July 11. Court records indicated the 22-year-old Maceo had previous run-ins with the law.

The university held a July 6 prayer service for Emerson outside O'Connell Hall, with director of campus ministry Dominican Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau presiding. Catholic University plans to create a permanent memorial to Emerson, noting he was a "beloved mentor to students."

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"The increase in violent crime near our campus is a critical issue that requires serious attention, especially on the perimeter of our campus," said the university in its July 17 statement.

In a July 14 message, university president Peter Kilpatrick outlined several ways in which the school was currently enhancing campus security.

Among the measures listed were increased foot, car and bike patrols by campus police, with more officers carrying firearms to ultimately ensure "an armed DPS presence on every shift."

To bolster armed officer presence, Kilpatrick said the university also would contract additional security guards and develop new safety training materials for students, faculty and staff.

A full-time director of emergency services is set to be in place by the fall 2023 semester, with more keycard access points to be installed on university buildings. Improved campus lighting along with expanded safety training and education are also among the initiatives Kilpatrick cited.

The federal Clery Act -- named for Jeanne Clery, a student raped and murdered in her Lehigh University dorm room in Pennsylvania in 1986 -- requires all colleges and universities participating in Title IV student financial aid programs to report campus crime data, to support victims and to publicly outline campus safety policies and procedures. The 2013 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act extended the Clery Act requirements to dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and related charges.