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LINDENWOOD

Emergency Text Messaging to Begin in Fall

Lindenwood University will have the ability to send emergency text messages to many of its students this fall. President James D. Evans has signed a contract with clearTXT, a company that will provide the service. Evans said the university will only use the service for important alerts and emergencies.

Participation in the alert system will be voluntary, Evans said, but the university is strongly encouraging all students to participate. Lindenwood will begin collecting mobile phone numbers when students arrive for check-in later in this summer. The university will perform a test of the system in late August.

“We hope we will never have to use this service,” said Evans. “But we need a quick and reliable way to communicate with our students in an emergency. Text messaging is undoubtedly going to be a faster way of communicating than email.”

Evans said the university began talks with clearTXT late in 2006, but the tragedy at Virginia Tech “caused us to speed up the process and examine how we could more efficiently handle crisis communications.”

Lindenwood plans to send a letter to students next month explaining the service and encouraging them to participate. The letter, Evans said, will stress that Lindenwood plans to use this service only for important alerts and emergencies.

Lindenwood is absorbing the full \$4,000 cost for the one-year contract with clearTXT and will not pass on that cost to students. However, students who do not have free text messaging as part of their cellular plans may be charged for Lindenwood text messages. Evans said such a message typically costs the recipient about 10 cents.

University officials say text messaging will not be the only way they will communicate with students in an emergency. Lindenwood plans to continue broadcast emails to students in emergencies, as well as updates on the University website.

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