



James E. Shepard, Founder

Office of the Chancellor

January 10, 2007

Dear NCCU Students, Parents, Alumni and Supporters:

The North Carolina Central University family is mourning the death of Denita Monique Smith, a graduate student from Charlotte, North Carolina, who was found dead Thursday, January 4, 2007, at her off campus apartment complex.

We learned Tuesday, January 11, 2007, that Durham Police Department's Homicide Unit obtained a warrant charging Shannon Elizabeth Crawley with the murder of Denita. Ms. Crawley was taken into custody in Greensboro, NC without incident. Authorities believe this matter was an isolated incident. The Durham Police Department is handling the investigation in conjunction with the NCCU Police Department. Both departments are to be commended for their hard work in apprehending a suspect.

We are deeply saddened by what has happened and our hearts go out to Denita's family and those students and faculty who had the privilege of knowing her. Denita was an outstanding and promising young student whose life has been cut short. She enrolled in NCCU in 2000 and graduated in May 2004 with a bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in mass communications. She was enrolled in NCCU this semester as a graduate student in a master's degree program in English.

Denita resided at Campus Crossings, a facility leased by the university to house our students. Students reside in the apartment complex and there are no outside residents living on the property. This property has residential assistants from the university on duty. The university works in conjunction with the complex to provide security on site. Our new police chief will work to heighten security throughout campus, including at Campus Crossings.

Our students' safety is our utmost concern. The university has increased private security personnel at the apartment complex from two to nine security guards who are on duty with 24-hour patrols. There also has been limited access to the property for anyone who is not a resident. We have deployed grief counselors to work with our students, faculty and staff. These counselors are located at Campus Crossings and on campus.

We have been in communication with Denita's parents and have been working in conjunction with her family to plan a memorial service scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 2007, in B.N. Duke Auditorium at 10:50 a.m. We have also planned several information sessions with students and other events to help our campus and constituents deal with this tragic incident.

We ask that you keep Miss Smith's family and the entire NCCU family in your prayers during this time of bereavement.

Sincerely,

James H. Ammons
Chancellor