

Message to the Campus Following the Deaths of Officers Painter and Jefferson

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Today our campus community experienced unspeakable tragedy. Two members of the Bridgewater College family were senselessly and violently taken from us. The sadness is palpable. Words are not adequate, not nearly so, to express the grief, sadness, fear and—justifiably—the anger we all feel.

Campus Police Officer John Painter and Campus Safety Officer J.J. Jefferson were shot and killed on campus while protecting us. These officers were close friends, known to many of us as the “dynamic duo.” John was J.J.’s best man in his wedding this year. They were beloved by students, faculty and staff. I hurt for their families and loved ones, as I know we all do.

This is a sad and dark day for Bridgewater College. I know we all have so many questions and not many answers. One thing I do know, though, is that we will rally around one another and support each other as we move forward from this day. We are all victims, though some much more so than others, and it will be important that we each seek to find comfort and support in the ways most meaningful for us.

We will be sharing more information very soon on grief counseling and other forms of support.

I pray for that peace which passes all understanding for John and J.J.’s families and for all of us. Please take care of yourself and each other.

David