



Res students trapped during false fire alarm still demanding apology

By Veronique Hynes September 27 2012.

Tags: [Allan Burns](#), [Joel Tallerico](#), [Lennox and Addington House](#), [Omar Bainto](#), [Rideau River Residence Association](#)

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Students trapped on the eighth floor of Lennox and Addington during a false fire alarm are still demanding an apology from the Department of University Safety.

On Sept. 12, director of university safety Allan Burns said he did not think his department needed to apologize for the incident.

Rideau River Residence Association vice-president (administration) Joel Tallerico was one of the students trapped on the floor. He said RRRR will continue to press the department for an apology.



Joel Tallerico was one of the students trapped on the floor when the doors locked. (File photo)

"To hear [Allan] Burns say that they're not going to do anything was really disheartening to us, but that's not to say we're finished. This is only the beginning, we're not going to stop until this has been resolved," Tallerico said.

Approximately 18 students on the floor were trapped because the emergency exit doors locked themselves during a false fire alarm.

Tallerico said he called campus safety twice but the dispatcher, who was trying to communicate with an ambulance, asked him to hang up.

Many of the students on the floor panicked, Tallerico said, and some of them were close to tears.

A few minutes later, safety officers arrived and opened the doors.

Tallerico said he is unhappy with how the officers communicated with the students.

"I know for a fact, they carry a notepad. All you had to do was write it on your hand: 'False Alarm' and put it against the glass. Then the students on the other side know it's a false alarm, and the panic level drops," Tallerico said.

"There seems to be a misunderstanding that we were not communicating with the students," Burns said. "That is not correct. Our officer was on the floor within minutes of the alarm talking to students through the locked door and telling them that it was a false alarm and we were working on getting the doors released."

Later that day, Burns spoke to the students and offered them counselling services.

Tallerico said he and RRRR president Omar Bainto met with Burns on Sept. 26. The RRRR executives asked for a public apology.

"We all deserve an apology for what happened. We're happy that they took the first step for apologizing for the mechanical failure, but the lack of communication is really the thing that needs to be addressed here," Tallerico said.

Tallerico said he and RRRR president Omar Bainto met with Burns on Sept. 26. The RRRR executives asked for a public apology.

Again, Burns refused because he said his officers responded exceptionally given the circumstances, according to Tallerico

"The normal acceptable evacuation time for a building of that size is within 8 to 10 minutes. The doors on the 8th floor were unlocked within 10 to 11 minutes," Burns has previously said.

"We'll still fight on," Tallerico said. He said he will continue to ask Burns for an apology, and may organize a letter-writing campaign because "students are still very upset about the incident".

"We all deserve an apology for what happened. We're happy that they took the first step for apologizing for the mechanical failure, but the lack of communication is really the thing that needs to be addressed here," he said.

Source:

College magazine website

<http://www.charlatan.ca/2012/09/res-students-trapped-during-false-fire-alarm-still-demanding-apology/>