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New York-Based Consultant Hired to Review Residence Hall Security Program at UMass Amherst

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AMHERST, Mass. – Business Protection Specialists, Inc., an independent security consulting firm based in Canandaigua, N.Y., has been hired by the University of Massachusetts Amherst to conduct a comprehensive review of its residence hall security program and recommend improvements to ensure a safe campus community.

As part of the study, BPS representatives will visit campus during spring break, March 18-22, to tour the 45-residence hall system, inspect technical security measures and current visitor access in the six residential areas. The BPS team will return to UMass Amherst April 4-5 to observe security procedures while students are on campus.

“The true value of this project is to learn what BPS observes and recommends for improving the security processes now in place,” says UMass Amherst Police Chief John Horvath. “We are sharing data and information on our current systems with BPS and the company plans to interview students, residence hall staff and other stakeholders about safety issues.”

Frank Pisciotta, the firm’s president, is a former chief of security at Alfred University in Alfred, N.Y., and has been certified as a security consultant by the International Association of Professional Security Consultants. BPS has previously worked with Bucknell University, State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, Cornell University and SUNY Oswego.

According to Horvath, the BPS review will focus on a range of areas, including building access safeguards, key control, communications; policies, procedures and practices, student security monitors and supervisors, educational efforts surrounding security, and the relationship between the UMass Police Department and residential life. During their visits to campus, the consultants will meet with students, residence hall staff, resident assistants and others from Residential Life.

After obtaining feedback from the campus community on its initial findings, BPS is expected to submit a second draft study in May. Once those recommendations are reviewed on campus, a final report and cost estimates will be forwarded by BPS.

BPS was among five firms that submitted proposals for the security review. A selection committee chaired by Deputy Police Chief Patrick Archbald and including representatives of Residential Life and the Dean of Students Office interviewed four companies to make presentations. After one firm withdrew, three companies made presentations to the selection committee as well as Horvath and Jim Meade, manager of residence hall security. BPS was chosen after the company’s references were checked, said Horvath.