

Nov. 6, 2015

To: The St. Mary's University Community
From: Thomas M. Mengler, President
Re: No Guns on Campus Policy Continues at St. Mary's

During the past legislative session, Senate Bill 11 – also known as Campus Carry – was signed into law and will become effective Aug. 1, 2016. As you know, the new legislation authorizes a concealed handgun license holder to carry a concealed handgun while on the campus of a public or private institution of higher education in Texas. St. Mary's, as a private institution, is authorized to prohibit license holders from carrying handguns on campus by utilizing the statutory right to opt out.

The opt-out process requires consultation with faculty, staff and students. Since the beginning of the fall semester, I've consulted with the University's Leadership Council, Human Resources Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate and student leaders. Vice presidents met with their departments to gather feedback. The deans consulted faculty members of their Schools. And student leaders were charged with soliciting input from the general student body.

Our process of consultation is now complete. Following an overwhelming consensus, we have decided to utilize the legislation's opt-out provision and, therefore, maintain the University's current [weapons policy](#), which has been in place for a number of years. Our current policy – of prohibiting the carrying of a handgun while on campus – and our excellent police force has helped to maintain a safe and secure campus.

I underline this point: I credit our excellent police force for placing the safety and security of our students, as well as our faculty, staff and guests, first among their priorities. I see no justifiable reason to reject or alter campus practices and policies that have been so effective for so many years.

And finally, at the Board meeting this morning, the Trustees ratified my decision to opt out of Senate Bill 11, prohibiting guns on campus.