

## **Parents: how to receive emergency alerts**

12/17/10

There is some confusion over the "emergency notifications" to parents from Alfred University. There are actually two separate channels for emergency notification; one is maintained and controlled by Alfred University, the other is part of a statewide system that AU participates in, but does not maintain or control. NY-Alert is the system maintained by the State Emergency Management Office (or its successor). Students sign up through Banner, opting to enter the means - cell phone, email, landline, fax - by which they want to be contacted in the event of an emergency on campus. When they sign up, students may enter more than one telephone number, and some choose to put down a parent's cell phone number so that their parents receive the same text message, at approximately the same time, as students, faculty and staff. The University is limited in the types of messages it is permitted to send out through NY-Alert, and messages are, by necessity, very brief and may refer recipients to another source, the web site for example, for additional information. In most emergencies, the University would use NY-Alert for the initial notice, and the University's own web site or email system for updates during the crisis. The University cannot add parents' cell phones to the NY-Alert list; only the students can do that for their parents. Students may update their information at any time by logging into <http://banweb.alfred.edu/>. The University sends its files to NY-Alert for updating on a regular basis, but you should be aware that there can be a few days' lag between when the information is updated in Banner and when NY-Alert imports it into its system. The second channel for notifying parents is through an email database maintained by the Office of Communications, and it really should not be considered to be "emergency" communications. In the past, we have sent emails to parents, using that database, to inform them of situations on campus, but typically the message would not go out in the midst of a crisis. It should be considered more of a means of updating or following up when the immediate crisis is past. To sign up for the parent emails and/or enews, the weekly newsletter, parents are asked to email the Office of Communications at [communications@alfred.edu](mailto:communications@alfred.edu). During an emergency, we suggest parents check the Alfred University web site - either <http://www.alfred.edu> or <http://www.alfred.edu/par...> -- for the most up-to-date information.