

with public officials, reevaluate current procedures and seek new approaches," Brown wrote in a letter to the university community.

On Tuesday, a 38-year-old postdoctoral fellow was grabbed from behind, thrown to the ground, stabbed, and punched in the face near the intersection of Browne and Pleasant streets in Brookline, about a half-mile from campus, according to a police report.

The man was hospitalized and treated for his injuries, which were not life-threatening. A MacBook laptop, cellphone, and iPad were stolen, police said.

"He stated they told him to shut up when he began to argue with them about taking his property," Brookline police said in their report.

The two suspects were described as males, both about 6 feet tall, wearing black fleece pullovers or hooded sweatshirts, blue jeans, and dark knit masks over their faces.

An emergency alert was sent to the campus about a half-hour after the attack.

The attack marked at least the eighth time this academic year that a Boston University student or someone affiliated with the university has reported being the victim of a robbery or attempted robbery on or around the university's Charles River campus.

In most of the cases, a gun was shown to or pointed at the victims.

On Wednesday, some students said they were concerned for their safety.

"I'm a little sketched out by it," said Caroline Jenks, a BU freshman.

"I make these guys walk me home every night," she added, nodding toward two friends and classmates beside her, Nick Zapatero and Mike Oldcorn.

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Graphic: Robberies near BU

MATT ROCHELEAU FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Boston University student Mike Oldcorn says he is not particularly worried, but his friend and classmate Caroline Jenks says she no longer walks alone on campus at night.

Oldcorn said he is not particularly worried.

"We still walk around the area at night all the time, sometimes alone" he said.

Michelle Kwon, a 19-year-old sophomore, said she has a friend who keeps her phone in her hand with the number to call campus police dialed up and ready to call if she sees something frightening.

"I try to walk with a friend at night, and I try not to get back to my room too late," Kwon said.

Joseph Ali, 30, began taking English language classes at BU in September, when he moved to Boston from his native Saudi Arabia.

He said that he never expected to hear of crimes like the robbery.

"There's a big concern about it," Ali said. "I'm afraid to go alone around here at night. You can't walk by yourself. You don't feel comfortable. We're all more careful than before."

Brown said that he met with the chief of campus police Wednesday morning and that the department is working closely with other local law enforcement agencies to investigate the recent robberies and to explore preventive measures.

"We share a common concern about the safety situation in these neighborhoods," his letter to the university said. "We will work diligently to help find answers."

The weekend after winter recess ended, BU students were robbed in three separate incidents near the campus during a two-hour stretch during the late-night and early-morning hours of Jan. 18 and 19.

Several days later, a Quincy man was arrested and charged for his alleged role in one of those robberies. An accomplice is being sought.

In the fall, a few weeks after the academic year began, four robberies were reported. In mid-October, three Boston teenagers were arrested and charged in connection with two of those robberies. In December, a Norfolk County grand jury indicted the teenagers.

Meanwhile, Boston College police said they would step up patrols after receiving reports of two armed robberies during the past week, one at the intersection of Reservoir Avenue and Lee Road in Newton, the other on Lake Street in Brighton.

Officials continue to advise people to be vigilant; avoid poorly lit areas; get a ride instead of walking; walk in groups; avoid wearing headphones or displaying valuable devices like cellphones, tablets, and laptops. Students can also request to be escorted by campus security.

"If you are you confronted with physical violence or the threat of violence, we recommend you do not resist or fight unless you feel that your physical safety is in immediate jeopardy," Police Chief Thomas G. Robbins of the BU Police Department said in a letter.

Brookline police said investigators believe someone may have witnessed Tuesday's attack and asked anyone who did to call 617-730-2222.

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