



Student Affairs

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING BRIEF

This document outlines steps Student Affairs will take in the event of a crisis.

Prepared By: **Name, Title, Unit/Department**

Date

NOTE: Right-click on the image above and select Change Picture to replace the photo.

Identify and Know Your Stakeholders

Create a complete listing of internal and external stakeholders to ensure you know who you must work with and to inform throughout the crisis. Remember to review the list frequently and update it as needed.

STAKEHOLDERS

NAME	TITLE/UNIT	KEY INTERESTS	INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL	WORK PHONE	CELL PHONE	EMAIL	COMMENTS

Tip: Establish an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Student Affairs, separate from the institutions' EOC. This will ensure Student Affairs leadership and the colleagues you choose to include on your crisis communications team have a dedicated space of their own to meet, strategize, and deliberate when a crisis happens.

Crisis Communication Response Plan

Your brainstorming and assessment process should lead to the creation of a crisis response plan that is tailored to Student Affairs and your institution.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

CRISIS NAME	
COMMUNICATION GOAL	
TARGET AUDIENCES	
ISSUE ANALYSIS AND VERIFICATION (CONFIRMED BY AT LEAST TWO CREDIBLE SOURCES)	
WHO IS INVOLVED?	
WHAT HAPPENED?	
WHAT IS CURRENTLY BEING DONE?	
WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?	
WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?	
HOW DID IT HAPPEN?	
ARE ADDITIONAL FACTS NEEDED?	

NOTIFICATION AND MONITORING

Notification Methods

Identify the notification methods you will use to rapidly reach the campus community and beyond. Employing more than one type of communication platform (email and text, for example) greatly increases your chance of disseminating a message successfully.

NOTIFICATION METHODS (USE MULTIPLE METHODS (E.G., EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITE, AUTOMATED/MANUAL TEXT))

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Monitoring Systems

Monitoring what's being said about the crisis on traditional and social media can alert you to negative messages that might amplify the situation. You can use free monitoring services such as Google Alerts and Hootsuite, but you can also use paid monitoring services to report results in various formats. Your Office of Public Affairs or Strategic Communications may also be able to monitor a crisis for you. It is wise to check with them before setting up your own monitoring methods. Monitoring feedback during a crisis allows you to make logical changes to strategy and tactics. Train personnel, such as clerical staff, who have front-line contact with people to immediately report any feedback they receive to the crisis communication team.

MONITORING METHODS (E.G., SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWSPAPERS, WEBSITES, TV, GOOGLE ALERTS, HOOTSUITE)

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MESSAGING

Key Messages

The crisis communication team should aim to develop three crisis-specific messages based on verified information. It may also be necessary to develop some targeted messaging for specific audience segments (e.g., parents, alumni, donors). You can, of course, modify your messaging in accordance with the specific nature of an actual crisis. You will also need to adapt your messaging to different forms of media. For example, images may need to be developed that contain key message points and a short URL for more information for Instagram.

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES

AUDIENCE	TOP THREE KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY CHANNELS
ALL AUDIENCES	1. 2. 3.	
STUDENTS (Tell students exactly what you know has happened and implement a plan to manage phone calls.)	1. 2. 3.	
PARENTS/FAMILIES (Tell family members exactly what you know has occurred and implement a plan to manage phone calls.)	1. 2. 3.	
SURROUNDING COMMUNITY (Define the type and extent of the crisis. Inform the community surrounding your campus of the crisis.)	1. 2. 3.	

Important! Provide a dedicated phone number, email address, and mailing address for institution emergency response information.

IDENTIFY KEY LEARNINGS

Post-Crisis Review

Once the crisis has passed, implement the following best practice: The Student Affairs crisis communication team should meet to conduct a formal analysis of its work. The team should review what worked, what did not, and what could be improved prior to the next crisis. Then, the team should use these results to update the crisis communication response plan. It would also be beneficial for the Student Affairs crisis communication team to debrief with the institution’s crisis communications team so both teams are aware of each other’s analysis of the event.

CRISIS REVIEW FORM

STRATEGY / TACTIC	DESCRIPTION	RESULT	POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS
SUCCESSFUL			
SUCCESSFUL			
PROBLEMATIC			
PROBLEMATIC			

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