



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Office of the President

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of a Crisis Communication Plan is to clarify communication roles and responsibilities of various University of Dallas personnel during a crisis situation. This plan deals specifically with crisis communication, coinciding with the university's various safety and emergency plans. The plan seeks to accommodate the information needs of a variety of audiences, including making information accessible for all intended audiences.

IDENTIFYING A CRISIS

A crisis situation may fall primarily into two broad categories. The first is a campus emergency that acutely threatens the life, property or general safety of the campus community. Examples of these types of emergencies include, but are not limited to, severe weather or natural disaster, fire, active shooters, or other crime-in-progress on campus. An acute campus emergency will often involve a relatively large number of people over a relatively short period of time.

A crisis situation may also be an event, discovery or other occurrence that threatens, chronically, the reputation of the University of Dallas, or affects UD's ability to carry out its mission. Examples of crisis situations that involve a chronic threat to the university include, but are not limited to, misconduct on the part of a person affiliated with the University of Dallas, the removal of the President or another senior university official, or the discovery of a significant financial irregularity. Chronic crisis situations will often involve a relatively smaller number of people over a relatively longer period of time.

Not all crisis situations fall precisely in one of these two categories. Examples of hybrid crisis situations include, but are not limited to, a cyber attack or the death of a member of the UD community by suicide or overdose.

This plan not only addresses media relations and communication issues, but also includes procedures for the rapid identification of potentially harmful situations and the methods for responding to these situations quickly and effectively.



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OBJECTIVES

- To serve as a resource to factually assess situations and determine whether and what type of communications responses are warranted.
- To identify and assemble the Crisis Communications Leadership Team that will give instructions to the Crisis Communications Committee in the event of a crisis.

- To provide guidance and implement immediate actions to:
 - a. Identify constituencies that need to be informed about the situation.
 - b. Communicate facts about the crisis with one voice.
 - c. Minimize rumors.
 - d. Restore order and/or confidence.

THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP TEAM

The main responsibility of the Crisis Communications Leadership Team (CCLT) is to supervise communication with various UD internal and external stakeholders. The CCLT will be the primary communicators during the crisis situation and comprises the President, the Executive Vice President, the Provost, and the Vice President for University Advancement. The CCLT will select the appropriate communications channel(s) based on the needs and circumstances of the incident, the nature of the message to be communicated, and the intended audience.

THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Crisis Communications Committee (CCC) will take direction from and support the CCLT during a crisis situation. The CCC are secondary communicators during a crisis situation. The President may appoint additional members to the CCC depending on the nature of the crisis situation. Cell phone numbers and email addresses should be compiled and kept on hand before a crisis strikes, and should be continuously updated. The CCC comprises:

CCC Member	Reports to CCLT Member
Chief of Police	Executive Vice President
Assistant Vice President for IT	Executive Vice President



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Assistant Vice President for Admissions	Executive Vice President
Director of Facilities	Executive Vice President
Director of Human Resources	Executive Vice President
Rome Campus - Dr. Peter Hatlie (Crises Affecting Rome Campus Directly)	Provost
All Academic Deans	Provost
Dean of Students	Provost
University Chaplain	Provost
Director of Alumni Relations	Vice President for University Advancement
Director of Communications Operations	Vice President for University Advancement

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The President shall keep the Chair of the Board of Trustees promptly informed of all acute campus crisis situations. The President shall actively consult the Board Chair in all chronic crisis situations. The board chair will determine when to engage the EC and full board.

ANTICIPATING LIKELY CRISES

The Crisis Communications Leadership Team and Crisis Communications Committee should create a list of potential crises and consider actions for identifying likely crises:

- Review local, national and education-specific media headlines for potential crises.
- Identify risks to UD's geographic location that could make it susceptible to crises such as a chemical spill, an earthquake or a terrorist attack.



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- Identify any internal problems or issues to anticipate a smoldering crisis that could damage the university's reputation if revealed publicly.
- Create a list of local and statewide emergency numbers to have on hand.

The CCLT and the CCC will have access to a more detailed document that contains a list of potential crises with actions and message templates. The detailed document will also serve as a repository for contact information for CCLT, CCC and media and statewide emergency numbers.

IDENTIFYING KEY CONSTITUENCIES

UD must identify the following potential stakeholders so that no key group is overlooked when rapid decisions are necessary:

- Board Members
- Faculty and Staff
- Students
- Students' Parents
- Rome Campus Staff and Students
- Alumni
- Donors, Prospective Donors, Friends of the University, Prospective Students
- Diocese of Dallas
- Media
- Crisis Victims and Their Families
- Government Officials, Surrounding Community & Partners

PROCEDURES & ACTIONS

The Crisis Communications Leadership Team, after assessing the nature and scope of the situation, should meet to develop a plan of action including some, or all, of the following:

1. Designate a spokesperson. — In cases of a significant crisis, the president or the highest-ranking university official must take the lead in conveying the administration's response to the crisis, showing that the university has control of the situation, calming public concern, and setting an example for the entire campus. As the situation evolves, the senior leader acting as the key spokesperson may change (see action No. 3). In addition, a media relations representative from the CCLT will need to be selected to handle possible media inquiries.



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2. Draft a fact sheet and key messages. — The fact sheet should contain a summary statement of the situation, including all known details to be released to the media. This information should be prepared by the Office of Marketing & Communications and approved by the CCLT members. This fact sheet should be analyzed with respect to the public's right to know and concerns for privacy and security (FERPA or restricted for apprehension and/or prosecutorial reasons). The fact sheet should be shared with deans and other key personnel of the university so that they are made aware of the situation, protocols and steps to communicate to our key constituencies. In addition, the main UD phone reception staff should be briefed and given guidelines and a script on how to handle and direct calls should key constituents or members of the media call. The fact sheet and key messages will need to be updated during the entire timeline of the crisis and shared again with the same groups.

3. Assign a member of the Crisis Communications Committee to communicate facts of the situation (contained in the fact sheet) and the university's intended response to key constituencies. — Each member will use approved messages and templates for this effort. The templates will be created by the CCLT and the Office of Marketing & Communications ahead of time and kept on hand to expedite the process of getting information released immediately. Whenever possible, the first groups that should be informed about a crisis are internal audiences directly affected, such as students, employees, faculty and trustees. The next groups typically would include parents, alumni, community leaders and other audiences, as well as the media.

Among those who may be notified, depending on the situation, are:

- Law enforcement agencies — Should be notified by a campus Police Department representative.
- Deans of schools, faculty and staff — Should be notified through voicemail, email, text message and/or meeting depending on the nature of the crisis.
- Students — Should be notified through mass meetings coordinated by the Office of Student Affairs. OSA should also send out emails and/or text messages/voicemail.
- Rome Campus - notify key staff and send a statement to inform the campus of the situation.
- Board of Trustees & National Alumni Board — CCLT member to provide direction depending on crisis.
- Parents of students — Should be notified by the Office of Student Affairs via email and/or text messages/voicemail.
- Alumni — CCLT to designate spokesperson and provide direction depending on crisis.



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- Local community — If the situation has an impact on local residents, should be notified via flyers or mass media or through the local law enforcement agency.
- Media — Should be notified by a designated media relations representative and spokesperson selected by the CCLT.

If necessary, Marketing & Communications will work with the CCLT to develop:

- Press release/statement for the media. As part of this effort, a separate log will be maintained to record all calls and interview requests from members of the media. Efforts will be made to monitor news coverage and correct any significant inaccuracies in reports.
- University website homepage news headline that links to a webpage that includes information from the fact sheet. These pages will need to be updated regularly to include updates.
- Create a message for an “Update Crisis Hotline.”
- Create messages for social media channels.
- Hold a press conference — in the Catholic Foundation Board Room — Marketing & Communications to assemble and alert the media with specific details. If necessary, a section of the main parking lot by Lynch circle will be reserved for members of the media.
- The university will welcome reporters and allow them as much access as determined necessary by the CCLT. The media relations representative will facilitate access and respond quickly to requests, determine whether it is appropriate to allow location shooting by TV and newspaper photographers and when, and who will accompany the media. In addition, the media relations representative will work with the Police Chief to determine safe access and parking for media depending on the type of crisis and location.
- Photography — This may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries and/or to possible later litigation, as well as to document events. Determine need to supply video and decide whether to provide video footage for immediate distribution or to document events.
- Alternative communications — Discuss alternative or additional means of conveying information, including letters to parents of students or selected constituencies of the university.

4. Staffing. — When a crisis has been declared, employees of the Office of Marketing & Communications will be relieved of their typical job responsibilities to help the members of the CCLT execute this plan. It may also be necessary to have additional help. The CCLT has the



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authority to enlist the help of communicators from across the university and assign them as needed to the crisis response.

5. Assessment. — The CCLT will convene within 48 hours of the crisis ending to conduct a debriefing, address any needed updates and recognize the work of partners whose help was invaluable. View/read any media coverage to evaluate dealings with the media. If outside partners were rendered, prepare letters of appreciation and include follow-up information. The CCLT will determine appropriate supplemental information to include on the web, social media and email for constituents. Update and distribute a final fact sheet and key messages to the deans and key personnel. Update the script for main reception staff. In addition:

- Continue to restore order and confidence with any follow-up stories or alternate communications post-crisis to constituents to combat rumors.
- Prepare a written report on the crisis that includes the nature of the crisis, news coverage and responses plus copies of media coverage and lessons learned to keep on file.
- Modify the Crisis Communication Plan.
- Re-educate the university about the changes.

APPROVED BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. HIBBS ON FEBRUARY 21, 2020.