

# **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

## **Public Relations**

### **SECTION 10**

Updated: 08/2007  
02/2008  
03/2009

## **Public Relations**

### **Role:**

To coordinate communication within the College, and externally between the College, the media and the public in the event of an emergency or controversial issue.

To assemble a Crisis Communication Team.

To establish a list in priority order of designated people to serve as the Public Information Officer whenever an emergency incident occurs on the Campus that will receive media attention.

To prepare and disseminate major announcements or press release concerning cancellation or resumption of Campus activities during and after incident. This should include announcements to media and through internal Campus communication channels.

To serve as sole College contact point for media inquiries and releases of public information during emergency incident.

To serve as rumor control point during and after incident or event.

To keep accurate records of releases to media, data and/or documents substantiating information, etc.

To plan for and operate a Media Center as needed for an emergency incident.

To establish procedures for maintaining communication with ERRG so that information available is most up to date.

To establish system for gathering information from the President's Office and Human Resources to provide to proper administrators and notifying families and relatives if injuries or casualties have occurred.

Know the location and availability of computers and auxiliary equipment for Crisis Communication Team.

Hold a debriefing session of Crisis Communication Team.

## **Public Relations**

### **Emergency Check List:**

- Check with University Police and other departments to determine extent of emergency or issue
- Call and Set Up Crisis Communication Team
- Crisis Communication Team will work with the President and the Emergency Response Group to develop the plan of action in communicating information.
- Designate a spokesperson.
- Identify constituencies that should be informed about the situation.
- Draft fact sheet and announcements to College community, media and key constituencies about status of incident and actions to be taken. Keep announcements updated.
- Have up-to-date list of local, regional and national media outlets.
- Place information on the Web.
- Keep accurate records of releases to media, data and/or documents substantiating information.
- Brief Emergency Response Resource Group and administrative personnel on procedures for release of information and answering public inquiries.
- Set up a Media Center for news media.
- Monitor radio and television broadcasts to determine what information is being presented.
- Coordinate system for gathering information and communicating with families and relatives about health and safety status of any victims.
- Coordinate with Student Affairs for the gathering and dissemination of information.
- Maintain phone book for, and work with, Emergency Response Resource Group to keep information up to date.
- Verify any information received from outside the Emergency Response Resource Group.
- Photograph situation and emergency response.

- Serve as rumor control during and after incident.
- Debriefing session with the Crisis Communication Team and the Emergency Response Resource Group.

# **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

## **Public Relations**

### **Crisis Communication Plan**

#### **SECTION 10 Appendix 1**

Updated: 03/2009

# **Crisis Communication Plan**

## **I. PURPOSE**

This Crisis Communication Plan provides policies and procedures for the coordination of communication within the College, and externally between the College and the media and public in the event of an emergency or controversial issue.

Emergencies may include fires, natural disasters, bomb threats, suicide, or major crimes. Controversial issues may include police investigations, protests or other situations (internal and/or external to the campus community) that demand a public response.

This plan is not intended to change the way emergencies are initially reported. All emergencies on campus should be reported immediately to University Police at 607-436-3550 or to Otsego County Emergency Service 911.

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 the situations quickly and effectively.

It is the goal of this Crisis Communication Plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations and to ensure that campus officials and communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision making hierarchy of the College and does not supplant that decision-making process.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN**

1. To factually assess the situation and determine whether a communications response is warranted.
2. To assemble a crisis communication management team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses.
3. To implement immediate actions to:
  - Identify constituencies that should be informed about the situation
  - Communicate facts about the crisis
  - Minimize rumors
  - Restore order and debrief necessary populations

## **III. PROCEDURES**

**Assessment** – The individual who encounters the potential emergency or crisis should secure their own safety, gather accurate preliminary information from the appropriate sources, and contact University Police.

A potential crisis is defined as an event or situation that could affect or has affected the health, safety or welfare of students, faculty, staff or campus visitors. After fact gathering, the

appropriate individual should determine whether an immediate response is necessary and, if so, should consult University Police.

A decision will then be made as to whether or not to convene the Emergency Response Resource Group. The President or designee will be immediately informed.

**Assembling the Crisis Communication Team** – Composition of the Crisis Communication Team will include at a minimum (Core Team):

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>CELL</b>	<b>FAX</b>
Nancy Kleniewski	President		607-436-2500		607-436-3089
Paul Adamo	Vice President		607-436-2535		607-436-2686
Carol Blazina	Vice President		607-436-2748		607-436-3089
F. Daniel Larkin	Provost/ Vice President		607-436-2517		607-436-2719
Leif Hartmark	Vice President		607-436-2081		607-436-2597
Steve Perry	Vice President		607-436-2513		607-436-2283

The Crisis Communication Team will work with the President and the Emergency Response Resource Group (ERRG), to develop the plan of action in communicating information to all constituencies. The following people or their designees are on the ERRG:

- President
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Vice President for College Advancement
- Vice President for Student Development
- Vice President for Community Relations
- Chief of University Police
- Associate Vice President for Facilities

Other people may be asked to respond to the College Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) when their area(s) have been affected by the incident or if their facilities may be asked to respond.

## **Crisis Communication Action Plan**

After assessing the nature and scope of the situation, the Core Team should call together all members of the Crisis Communication Team to develop a plan of action including some, or all, of the following items:

### **1. Designate a spokesperson**

In most cases the spokesperson should be the Vice President for Community Relations or the President. The Community Relations may appoint a person possessing the direct knowledge of the crisis to act as spokesperson.

In case of a significant crisis, the president or the highest ranking college official should take the lead in conveying the administration's response to the crisis, showing that the college has control of the situation, calming public concern and setting an example for the entire campus.

### **2. Draft a fact sheet**

Working with the Crisis Communication Team, the Community Relations will draft a fact sheet or press release. The fact sheet should contain a summary of the situation including all known details to be released to the media. This information should be made available to (and approved by) the President, Vice Presidents, appropriate deans and other individuals as determined.

### **3. Notify key constituencies**

Determine key constituents who should be informed of the crisis. It is important to keep administration, faculty, staff and students informed of appropriate details and actions taken by the college during an emergency. Effective communications will help quell rumors, maintain morale and ensure continued orderly operations of the College. Among the groups that should be considered for communication in a crisis situation are:

- Law enforcement agencies
- Administration, faculty staff and students
- Parents of students (when applicable under FERPA)
- College Council
- General public
- Mass media
- Alumni
- Donors
- Local government officials
- Systems Administration
- City of Oneonta
- County of Otsego

### **4. Assign Members of the Crisis Team for Communications**

The Vice President for Community Relations or designee will brief all members of the Crisis Communication Team. Each member of the team will communicate the facts of the situation (contained in the fact sheet) and the College's intended response to the assigned constituency.



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

- **Law Enforcement Agencies – Refer to Appendix 1 6-14**  
University Police will notify appropriate agencies.  
*(Append list of agencies with people and telephone numbers)*
- **Campus faculty, staff -- \_\_\_\_\_**  
Information will be provided by the Office of Public Relations via facsimile, e-mail, campus mail, voice mail and/or mass meetings. The Office of Public Relations should handle this.
- **Students -- \_\_\_\_\_**  
Information will be provided to students by the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Development or Office of Public Relations via e-mail, campus mail, voice mail and/or mass meetings. Fliers may be distributed within residence halls. A current list of students and local addresses is available in the EOC.
- **College Council – See Section 14**  
Members of the board of trustees may be reached via telephone, facsimile or email. Phone lists are maintained by the Office of the President, who should coordinate any correspondence.
- **Parents of Students -- \_\_\_\_\_**  
Parents can be notified via phone, the campus Website or a hotline set up by Telecommunications at 436-4585, or the News Hotline at 436-2000. These phone lines will have a taped message updating the situation and directing parents to the crisis Web page. This Web page will be appropriately updated as necessary by the Office of Public Relations.
- **Local Community and Mass Media – Office of Public Relations**  
The Crisis Communications Team may prepare news releases for distribution. If the situation has an impact on local residents, fliers can be distributed and a Website established. In cases involving employee or student injuries or deaths, families will be notified by appropriate campus officials before the information is released to the public.
- **Government and Health Agencies – See Section 14**  
Government entities that need to be informed should be handled by the President or Office of Public Relations.

## **5. Alert the Media**

Determine whether a news conference and/or news release are an appropriate means of conveying information to the news media, and the public. The Crisis Communication Team will determine the logistics of the news conference including:

- When?
- Where?
- How media is to be contacted?
- Which media will be contacted?
- Who will supervise the news conference?
- Who will appear?
- Other items

## **6. Establish Emergency Command Center/Joint Media Center**

Determine whether the magnitude of the crisis merits establishing the Campus Emergency Operations Center (for police and college officials) and/or Media Center (for larger gatherings of the media for briefings or press conferences).

- Primary EOC: University Police Training Room
- Primary Media Center: Alumni Hall Little Theater
  
- Secondary EOC: President's Conference Room, Netzer
- Secondary Media Center is Craven Lounge, Morris Hall

## **7. Photography**

A. Decide the need to assign a photographer to take pictures of the scene. This may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries, to possible later litigation, as well as documenting events.

B. Determine whether it is appropriate to allow location shooting by TV and newspaper photographers.

C. Determine when, where, and who will accompany media covering an incident.

## **8. Other spokespersons**

Identify any other possible spokespersons (faculty, staff, student leaders or others) that might be available to the news media. Assign a Crisis Communications Team member to discuss with that individual the idea of making his/her side of the issue known to the media. Inform individuals in terms of appropriate ways to deal with the media.

## **9. Additional Communications**

Discuss additional means of conveying information including letters to parents of students or selected constituencies of the college, letters to newspaper editors and consultation with editorial boards.

## **10. Switchboards**

The following locations, which receive high volumes of incoming telephone calls to the college, should be notified and instructed about where to refer calls pertaining to the crisis:

- Campus Switchboard
- Human Resources

## **11. Rumor control**

Consider establishing a rumor-control hotline and/or a dedicated call-in line for media use. A Web page hot link from the college home page can be also used posting up-to-date information.

## **12. Loss of telephone service**

Cellular telephones and mobile radio communication (walkie talkies) can be used in the event that electricity or landlines are down.

## **IV. AFTERMATH**

Following any crisis, appropriate action must take place to ensure that members of the college community, and others as necessary, receive needed information and assistance to bring closure to the crisis as well as relief from the effects of the event.

The Office of Community Relations will issue media updates as long as necessary, then scale back activities as warrant. Upon termination of the crisis situation, the Vice President for Community Relations will schedule a meeting of all key players to review all actions taken. Attention should be placed on identifying and implementing measures to improve the Crisis Communications Plan used during the crisis. Also an After Action Report should be drafted to improve college's response to the incident or event.

Plan a debriefing session for all members of the Crisis Communication Team. Assess impact on Human Resources and future policies (including Crisis Communication Plan).

# **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

## **Public Relations**

### **Media Listing**

#### **SECTION 10 Appendix 2**

Updated: 03/2009

**MEDIA LISTING**

<b>Media</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>St</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Type</b>
Daily Star			Oneonta	NY	432-1000			Newspaper
WUOW	Gary Wickham		Oneonta	NY	436-2468		<a href="mailto:wickhagm@oneonta.edu">wickhagm@oneonta.edu</a>	Radio Station