

SECTION: Institutional Advancement/Public Relations
SUBJECT: Crisis Information Management Plan

ISSUED BY: Office of Public Relations
REPLACES: N/A
APPROVED BY: Officers of Administration
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1998

Policy

In the case of a crisis, the management of related information should follow the plan on pages. Implementation of the plan will be coordinated by the Office of Public Relations.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Distribution list from the Director of Communications Effective June 2005

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Associate Director of Communications/Editorial

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Associate Dean for Student Leadership

Manager of Security

ASBURY COLLEGE
Crisis Communication Management Plan
Revised – 6/05

The following is a series of communication guidelines to be followed in crisis/emergency situations:

1. In an emergency or any other situation in which the College will most likely have to respond to media inquiries, Director of Communications at extension 2412 should be contacted as soon as possible. If the Director cannot be reached, please call the Associate Director of Communications at extension 2411 or the President at extension 2110.
2. In these situations, the Office of Public Relations will advise the appropriate administrative officer or Board Trustee member on the communication options.
3. The Director of Communications is responsible for coordinating all communication related to a crisis or emergency. The Administrative Annex will serve as the official Crisis Management headquarters.
4. Appropriate administrators and others close to the situation should be kept informed.
5. Only after all essential information pertaining to the crisis is gathered, should a public statement be made. The statement should be reviewed and approved by the ranking administrator and/or trustee involved before it is issued.
6. For the sake of consistency and avoiding conflicting information, it is best for one person to speak for the College in an emergency. The Office of Public Relations should be the single voice in the early stages of a crisis. The College understands that both the media and the public prefer statements from those close to the situation and will attempt to comply whenever possible.
7. Whenever possible, information should be presented pro-actively. Within reason, the axiom “tell it all and tell it fast” is helpful particularly in crisis situations. This approach reinforces the College’s credibility and helps derail the possibility of continuous stories as each detail is brought to light by reporters.
8. Media representatives should be given periodic updates. Lapses in communication encourage reporters to seek out unofficial and less reliable sources.

9. In addition to being factual, all statements should be kept simple (avoiding complex information and technical terms whenever possible.) Questions about related subjects are inevitable; therefore, the College should be prepared for side issues.
10. The words, “no comment,” should be avoided. If an issue or situation is internally deemed not of a newsworthy nature, efforts will be made to avoid being put in the situation of giving the issue legitimacy.
11. In most cases it is appropriate to follow up with an acknowledgment of thanks to the media and other pertinent groups.

(Guidelines patterned after material provided by Centre College and Southwest Virginia Community College)