

# CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN WALDORF COLLEGE

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Marketing has been charged by the President of the College with managing all information during a crisis. The President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of the College, and the Vice President for Business Affairs have been designated as the official spokespersons for the College.

## II. CRISIS SITUATION

A crisis is defined as any situation which:

- requires immediate and coordinated action, and/or
- will have a significant impact on the operation or the reputation of the College,
- will have significant impact on student, faculty, and staff safety.

## III. PURPOSE

Although each crisis or emergency will require unique internal and external information responses, this crisis communication plan provides policies and procedures for the coordination of internal and external communications for Waldorf College in the event of a crisis. Upon determination that an emergency or crisis exists that necessitates a communications response this plan will be immediately implemented by the Office of Marketing as directed by the President.

## IV. ACTION PLAN

To ensure that the College's public information response to an emergency is quick, accurate, sensitive and responsible, the Office of Marketing will coordinate all crisis communications with campus and off-campus constituencies and media outlets. (Attachment A: List of constituencies)

During an emergency, the President, or any Vice President will serve as the College's spokesperson. Other media inquiries will follow guidelines set forth in the Media Directive. (*NOTE: See Attachment B: Media Directive for Non-Emergencies*).

Waldorf College seeks to be proactive in security and safety issues, but even the best efforts can not guarantee the prevention of all accidents, consequences of criminal/terrorist actions, or natural disasters. (See Attachment I Emergency and Safety Procedures and the Pandemic Plan through the website at: <http://waldorf-web/services/studentlife/safety.html>).

## **A. Immediate Response**

The President or the Director of Marketing (along with the guidance of the VP of Marketing) will determine if an official statement should be prepared and released OR if a campus-wide announcement should be issued.

***If a security or safety threat is identified, an **email** will be sent to all students, faculty and staff to alert them of actions they should undertake (such as leaving the building, remaining in their classrooms, etc.)***

- The Director of Marketing (VP of Marketing if necessary) will formulate the message with the assistance of one of the designated officials.
- The Director of Marketing will brief all College personnel who are assigned to answer the phone on appropriate responses to the crisis and/or emergency.
- The Director of Marketing will determine the most effective and efficient method of dissemination of statement(s) to on-campus and off-campus constituencies.
- The Director of Marketing or VP of Marketing will discuss statement(s) with the President prior to dissemination when possible.
- **Initial on-campus distribution will be to the Vice Presidents. Those administrators will be charged with forwarding this statement to staff, faculty, on-campus students, commuter students, and other constituencies.** *(NOTE: In cases involving employee or student injuries or deaths, the Office of the President will notify an immediate family member before the information is released to the public.*
- The Director of Marketing will coordinate off-campus distribution of information through media and the college web site. The Director of Marketing and Dean of Students (if a student(s) is involved) will coordinate information gathering from outside authorities.

## **B. On-Going Response**

- The Director of Marketing will update College constituencies about changes to or additional details of the situation via available methods of communication, i.e. voice mail, e-mail, campus e-news, press conferences, media contacts, phone contact, newsletters/other publications.
- The Director of Marketing and/or the VP of Marketing will determine the frequency of updates based upon availability of facts and other

immediate and long-term factors. The Director of Marketing will continue to collect and disseminate information until the College has recovered to its pre-crisis status.

- The Marketing Assistant will monitor coverage of the situation among constituencies as quickly as possible and relay information to the Director of Marketing and/or VP of Marketing.
- The Director of Marketing and/or the VP of Marketing will evaluate the effectiveness of plan and revise as necessary.

## **V. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

This plan is designed to complement and enhance the College's Crisis Communication Plan, by providing communications strategies warranted by the situation. The Office of Marketing will work directly with the Incident Management Team to facilitate dissemination of information. *(NOTE: See Attachment B: List of Incident Management Team Members*

## **VI. MEDIA RELATIONS**

Often the only information some constituencies receive during a crisis is through the media; therefore, media relations is an essential element during crisis communications. Waldorf College seeks to always be honest and courteous when dealing with the media.

Members of the Incident Management Team will be available for interviews related to their specific areas. If team members are contacted directly by the media, they will immediately inform the Director of Marketing. Waldorf College employees are asked to refer media inquiries during a crisis to the Office of Marketing.

## **Attachment A:**

### Waldorf College Constituencies

#### **Internal**

Students

- ◆ Resident
- ◆ Commuter
- ◆ Evening

Employees

- ◆ Faculty
- ◆ Staff

Visitors

- ◆ Groups using facilities
- ◆ Kids and summer camps

#### **External**

Media—Print and Electronic

Families of Residents

Families of Non-Residents

Families of Employees

Families of Visitors/Groups/Camps

Regents

Alumnae

Donors

Community-At-Large

Prospective Students

## Attachment B:

### Media Directive for Non-Crisis situations

#### Contacts:

Joy Newcom, Director of Brand, Marketing, [newcomj@waldorf.edu](mailto:newcomj@waldorf.edu) or 800-292-1903, ext. 8521 641-585-8521 / Cell: 641-590-5399

Heather Jordon, Communications Director, [jordonh@waldorf.edu](mailto:jordonh@waldorf.edu) or 800-292-1903, ext. 8268 / 641-585-8268 / Cell: 641-641-420-7775

#### For College policy issues:

President Richard Hanson is the first contact at: [hansonr@waldorf.edu](mailto:hansonr@waldorf.edu) or 800-292-1903, ext. 8130 / 641-585-8130 / Cell: 605-310-7289

The role of the Marketing Department is to work with the regional, national, and at times, international media to protect and enhance the reputation of the College. By helping members of the College handle media interest, the Marketing Department aims to ensure that coverage is accurate, fair, and whenever possible, positive. The College welcomes positive publicity as this plays an important role in maintaining the excellent reputation and high profile we want. As such, academic staff and coaches are encouraged to engage with the media about their areas of expertise.

This directive outlines how members of Waldorf College faculty and staff are to handle the media. This refers to all broadcast and print media available to the public, and excludes academic journals.

1. The only members of the College staff who are authorized to speak to the media on College policy or controversial issues are the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Director of Marketing. *If faculty or staff receive any questions from the media about College policy (such as admission procedures, student life, or strategic initiatives) or something that may be construed as controversial, these must be referred as indicated above.*
2. Faculty, coaches, and staff are requested to inform the Marketing Department for any of the following:
  - a. When they have published papers/articles in high-profile journals or presenting research at major academic meetings.
  - b. When they are quoted in print or on television or radio in their area of expertise. They should be referred to, in every instance, as being a member of faculty or staff of Waldorf College.
  - c. It is important that the Marketing Department be informed well in advance of any visits by politicians, media stars, or other VIPs.

3. Any requests to film on *College property* should be referred to the Office of the President or the Director of Marketing or VP of Admissions & Marketing.
4. Press statements and press releases regarding the College are always issued from the Office of the President or Marketing Department.
5. Members of the faculty and staff are entitled to write letters to the press that relate to their area of study or work, using their College address and title. However, if the letter concerns a personal opinion on a non-academic topic, a private address without a connection to Waldorf College is required. Letters to the press reflecting upon or discussing College policy or status can only be sent after consultation with the President.

### **Attachment C:**

#### Immediate Response Checklist

##### **Step One—First Alert**

- Alert Director of Marketing.
- Inform switchboard to direct all media calls to Director of Marketing.
- Assess situation and level of impact.
- Decide to issue a written statement or to hold a press briefing.
- If necessary, decide location for press briefing.
- Alert switchboard and media to time and location of press briefing.

##### **Step Two—Get the Facts**

- Gather known facts.
- Verify nature and scope of incident with Dean of Student Life (if student(s) involved) and/or responding emergency agencies.
- Determine if injuries and/or fatalities (do not release names).
- Assess public health risk (if any).
- Determine what authorities must/should be consulted.
- Consult immediately with responding agencies to coordinate release of information.

- Begin to craft message for release to media.
- Begin to plan to inform internal and all stakeholder audiences.

**Step Three—Verify and Keep the Information Moving**

- Time code all information as it arrives.
- Verify all facts before releasing.
- Keep appropriate senior officials up-to-date.
- Keep in consultation with appropriate government and legal authorities.
- Begin plan to inform internal and all stakeholder audiences.

**Step Four—Prepare for Media (Calls and Visits)**

- Start media contact record.
- Brief and rehearse designated media spokesperson(s). Go through “What information media will want” list and rehearse what verified information will be made available.
- Discuss media inquiry strategy.
- Get approval for media statement (as handout or release).
- Designate officials who will read statements or speak during press briefing.
- Review guidelines for dealing with the media with each person.

**Step Five—When Reporters Arrive**

- Ask media for identification and to sign in.
- Inform reporters of restrictions on movement/photography/filming.
- Proceed with briefing.
- Advise media of time and place of next and future updates.
- Follow-up on additional media inquiries.

## **Step Six—Media Follow-up & On-going Media Relations**

- Monitor media coverage.
- Assess and correct factual errors.
- Advise media of any significant new developments.
- Log all media contact.
- Evaluate effectiveness of plan and revise as necessary.

## **Attachment D:**

### What the Media Will Ask

#### Casualties

1. Number killed or injured or who escaped (use caution with initial numbers).
2. Nature of injuries received.
3. Care given to the injured.
4. Disposition of the dead.
5. Prominence of anyone who was killed, injured or escaped.

#### Property Damage

1. Estimated value of loss.
2. Description of property.
3. Importance of the property.
4. Other property threatened.
5. Insurance protection.
6. Previous emergencies in the area.

#### Causes

1. Testimony of participants.
2. Testimony of witnesses.
3. Testimony of key responders—the incident management team, police, fire, etc.
4. How emergency was discovered.
5. Who sounded the alarm?
6. Who summoned aid?
7. Previous indications of danger.

#### Rescue and Relief

1. The number of people engaged in rescue and relief operations.
2. Any prominent person in relief crew.
3. Equipment used.

4. Physically disabled persons rescued.
5. Care of involved after the incident.
6. How the emergency was prevented from spreading.
7. How property was saved.
8. Acts of heroism.

#### Description of the crisis or disaster

1. Extent of emergency.
2. Blasts and explosions.
3. Crimes of violence.
4. Attempts at escape or rescue.
5. Duration.
6. Collapse of structures.
7. Color of flames.
8. Extent of spill.

#### Accompanying incidents

1. Number of spectators, spectator attitudes and crowd control.
2. Unusual happenings.
3. Anxiety, stress of families, survivors, etc.

#### Legal actions

1. Inquests, coroner's reports.
2. Police follow-up.
3. Insurance company actions.
4. Professional negligence or inaction.
5. Suits stemming from the incident.

## **Attachment E:**

### Crisis Meeting Agenda

During an initial briefing about the crisis, the following specific agenda items will be reviewed:

1. Situation report:  
What appears to have happened?  
Confirmed facts (when crisis occurred and the immediately known facts).  
Scope of situation.
2. Initial response status:  
What is being done, why, by whom?  
Likely implementation time and hoped-for results.
3. Initial communications status:  
Who knows, who needs to know immediately and later on.  
Alert switchboard.
4. Short-term response requirements:  
Delegate crisis communications responsibilities.  
What must be done in the next several hours?  
What human and material resources are available or needed?
6. Short-term communication process:  
Staff, faculty, students, families, etc.
7. Next meeting time.

**Attachment F:**

Communication Methods Worksheet

Audience	Method of Communication
Resident Students	
Commuter Students	
Evening Students	
Faculty	
Staff	
Campus Visitors	
Media (Print/Electronic)	
Families of Resident Students	
Families of Non-resident Students	
Families of Employees	
Families of Campus Visitors	
Regents	
Alumnae	
Donors	
Community-at-large	
Prospective Students	

## **Attachment G:**

Waldorf College Incident Management Team

Responsible Administrator(s):

President, ext. 8130

Vice President for Academic Affairs, ext. 8133

Vice President for Business Affairs, ext. 8137

Director of Brand, Marketing, ext. 8521

Dean of Students, ext. 8161

Director of Facilities Services, ext. 8174

Counseling, ext. 8164

Health Services, ext. 8157

## **Attachment H:**

Dealing with the Media during a Crisis

A. Dos and Don'ts

During an emergency DO:

1. Release only verified information.
2. Escort the news media everywhere on the emergency site.
3. Have a designated spokesperson.
4. Keep accurate records and logs of all inquiries and news coverage.
5. Learn media deadlines and try to meet them.
6. Provide equal opportunities and facilities for print and electronic media.
7. Have a clear idea of what can and cannot be released.
8. Carefully coordinate planning and implementation of public relations activities with other aspects of the comprehensive emergency plan.

During an emergency DO NOT:

1. Idly speculate on the causes of the emergency.
2. Speculate on the resumption of normal operations.
3. Speculate on the outside effects of the emergency.
4. Speculate on the dollar value of losses.
5. Interfere with the legitimate duties of news people.
6. Permit unauthorized spokesperson to comment to the media.
7. Attempt to cover up, or purposely mislead the news media.
8. Place blame for the emergency.

B. General Guidelines for Dealing with the Media during a Crisis

- ◆ The Director of Marketing will respond in the most expedient manner possible with information for media during a crisis.
- ◆ If media initiates contact prior to a crisis decision being made, the Director of Marketing will neither confirm nor deny the incident/issue; but will investigate and return the call.
- ◆ The Director of Marketing will always attempt to coordinate release of information with responding emergency agencies—so both parties release the same information.
- ◆ The designated spokesperson should always be thoroughly briefed and constantly updated on status of the incident.
- ◆ If the incident appears to be of short duration, an approved follow-up statement will be issued, including a summary of the incident only by the President or Director of Marketing/VP of Marketing.
- ◆ If it appears to be a major, prolonged incident, the Director of Marketing will arrange for regularly scheduled media update briefings. At each briefing there will be a recap of the incident and any new information provided.
- ◆ If there is important new information, it will be shared with the media as quickly as possible by phone, fax and/or special media briefing.
- ◆ If possible, coordinate with television/radio stations to come up with a mutually acceptable plan for interviews that will allow live coverage to be carried without giving preferential treatment.
- ◆ Clearly state at the beginning of initial briefing that all verified information will be passed on and there will be no information given off the record. All information will be provided at the press gathering.

- ◆ Waldorf College will prohibit release of an individual's name who has been involved in an injury or fatality until his/her family has been notified.
- ◆ Waldorf College will not give the media access to the families of anyone injured or killed, unless the families expressly grant permission.
- ◆ Waldorf College will release location(s) treating injured persons, i.e. Mason City Hospital. Hospital media professionals are trained to answer media questions regarding treatment and status of patients.
- ◆ Waldorf College will work in conjunction with hospital spokesperson when releasing any information regarding an injured person's current condition.

Attachment I:

Emergency & Safety Procedures and the Pandemic Plan as found on the website: <http://www.waldorf.edu/studentlife/procedures/index.asp>