Crisis Communication Plan

Last updated: Aug. 27, 2021

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1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose and intent

The Crisis Communications Plan describes the procedures and actions required to communicate to the Georgian community, stakeholders and to the public, in the event of a serious incident or crisis. The intent is to identify the teams, people, procedures and tools that will enable Georgian to:

- Respond quickly
- Communicate efficiently and accurately
- Assist in protecting and enhancing the college's reputation
- Help keep people safe by sharing timely, accurate, and relevant information to key stakeholders

1.2   Scope

This plan does not change the way incidents are initially reported. All incidents on campus should be reported immediately to Campus Safety Services. The plan is to be used in conjunction with, and is supported by:

- Campus closures communications plan
- Campus lockdown procedures

The appendices provide details for key internal and external contacts as well as specific procedures, templates and supporting information.

1.3   Objectives

Plan objectives are as follows:

- Create informative key messages
- Provide staff, students and other stakeholders with accurate and up-to-date information
- Provide necessary instructions to staff and students in a timely manner

2   Crisis Communications Team – Structure, roles and responsibilities

2.1   Structure

The purpose of this section is to articulate the team structure, roles and responsibilities; and to describe the reporting structure between the team lead, Emergency Operating Committee and the senior management/executive group.

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│      Cheryn Thoun         │                       └──────────────────────────┘
│ Director, Marketing,      │
│ Communications            │   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ and Recruitment (MCR)     │   │      Kim Garraway         │
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                               └──────────────────────────┘    │      Elaine Murray        │
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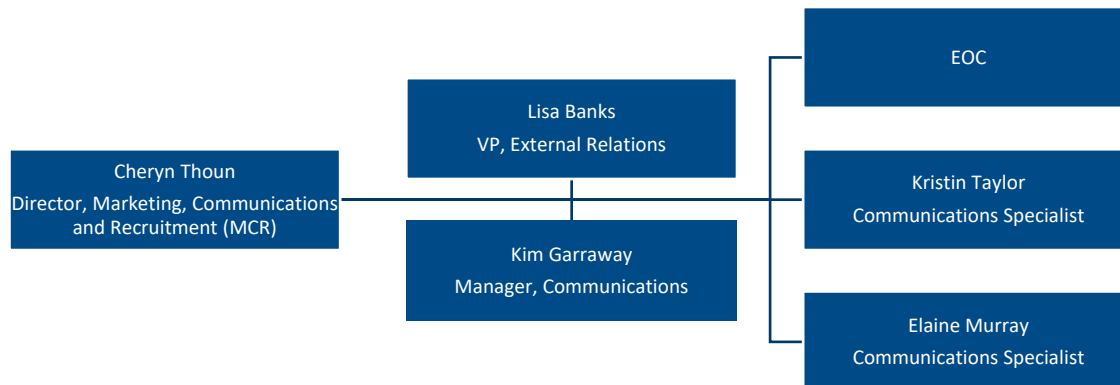
2.2   Roles and responsibilities

Each member of the team has specific roles and responsibilities, both prior to a crisis and during response. The table below describes the roles and responsibilities for each team member.

Name	Position	Response role	Responsibilities
Lisa Banks	Vice President, External Relations	Senior leadership approval	During crisis: • Ensure quick approval process for communication • Provide direction from President and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) • Keep SLT informed
Cheryn Thoun	Director, Marketing, Communications and Recruitment	Leader, marketing, communications and recruitment team, Crisis communications lead	During crisis: • Liaise with ECO • Develop strategy and create communication key messages • Communicate strategy and messaging to Manager, Communications • Business continuity • Alignment and assignment of additional resources, as required in reaction to crisis
Kim Garraway	Manager, Communications	Assist Director with executing	During crisis:

		crisis communications response	• Assist with developing strategy and creating communication key messages • Communicate strategy and messaging to team • With director, oversee execution of communications tactics
Kristin Taylor	Communications Specialist	Communications	During crisis: • Execute communications via Georgian's channels at the direction of Manager, Communications • Focus on internal communications
Elaine Murray	Communications Specialist	Communications	During crisis • Execute communications via Georgian's channels at the direction of Manager, Communications • Focus on media relations
Sarah Ireland	Web Content Specialist	Web communications	• Execute communications via the college website as needed

3   Crisis communication message approval

The approval process for internal and external messages during normal operations should not change in an emergency. The speed at which such approval takes place will increase significantly, as the situation dictates. The college will increase the speed of message development and approval by having the appropriate approval authorities engaged in the response from the start, and on stand-by to approve messages as required. Crisis response communications must be prioritized over regular business.

4   Response overview

4.1   Crisis Communications Team response

The team is already in place for day-to-day issues management. This same team would be ready to mobilize and become more focused in a larger crisis situation.

4.2   Managing reputational incidents

While team members will be engaged in all levels of emergencies, there will also be reputational incidents where select team members will be activated and work directly with senior management, and potentially selected specialists to manage the incident.

The team is already in place to handle day-to-day issues that may impact the college's reputation. Depending on the degree or scope of any particular incident, the Director, MCR, in conjunction with the VP External Relations, will direct any messaging.

5 Media and social media

5.1 Media spokesperson/people
As is the case in management of daily media requests and issues, appropriate spokesperson/people will be recommended by the Director, MCR and approved by the VP External Relations. Generally, larger reputational issues or a true crisis would require the President and CEO (or their designate if they're unavailable) to be the spokesperson.

5.2 Media monitoring
During a crisis or emergency, the media will want to get the facts in a timely manner to meet their deadlines, under the precedent of the public's right to know. The college is responsible for providing timely, accurate and transparent information to help ensure the safety and security of the community. The team will lead all interaction with the media regardless of campus or location.

The team already monitors day-to-day media and will utilize the same resources in a crisis. Depending on the scope of the crisis, a daily media monitoring report may be distributed to senior management.

5.3 Social media monitoring
The team will use the usual social media tracking channels and provide updates as necessary.

6 Internal Communications
During a crisis or emergency, it's imperative to remember and prioritize internal stakeholders. Where possible, messages should be delivered to the internal audience prior to distributing them to the media. In some cases, depending on type of crisis, the timing or sensitivity of the information, these messages may be delivered concurrently and at the discretion and approval of the VP External Relations.