

MOUNT VERNON NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY WIDE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

MVNU's **CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN** is available at K:/Common/Readonly/CrisisResponsePlan.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide a living Crisis Communications Process as a guideline for various levels and aspects of communication during a crisis event or incident. It is meant to be a basic outline of processes and procedures of the Crisis Communications Team, as due to the nature of a crisis, processes and procedures may change and will require flexibility.

DEFINITION OF A CRISIS:

Any life threatening event or situation that requires an immediate response to:

- Preserve lives and public health, or
- Protect property;

Or any event that can:

- Cause serious injuries or deaths,
 - Significantly disrupt operations (or infrastructure), or
 - Threaten the institution's financial standing or its ability to fulfill MVNU's mission.
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LEVELS OF CRISES:

The Crisis Response Team will monitor incidents closely to determine when they will be moved from INCIDENT to CRISIS to EXTREME CRISIS and take the necessary action to deal with each situation.

For example: An ice storm accompanied by a power outage may at first be an incident, but if it lasts for more than 24 hours it may move to CRISIS or EXTREME CRISIS levels with appropriate action following.

Non-Crisis Level – Emergency Incident

- Any significant incidents that do not rise to the level of a crisis as determined by the CR coordinator and executive team members (Examples: the natural death of a member of the campus community, death in an auto accident, etc.)
- An emergency incident may still require immediate action by appropriate MVNU personnel.

Crisis

- The majority of events will fall into this category (see "Definition" section above).

Extreme Crisis

- In certain circumstances, the CR coordinator and executive team may deem a crisis to be an “extreme crisis.”
 - This may happen when the effects of damage are widespread, affecting the surrounding town or county.
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THE IMPORTANCE OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS:

Crisis communications have a lasting impact on institutional reputation and constituent support. How well we convey our message to the public greatly depends on what is reported to the news media. This is especially true in a crisis, during which the news media is the primary means of communication to our constituencies. Because of the emotions that usually accompany crises, images formed from crisis reporting are especially important in shaping long-lasting public impressions of the institution.

The priority will be on maintaining timely and open communications with the media, providing complete and accurate information that has been confirmed about the emergency situation and MVNU’s response to the crisis at hand. Communications with the media will be frequent throughout the duration of the emergency situation.

ASPECTS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS:

First Responders

- First responders should contact 911 if appropriate.
- Note: You no longer need to dial 9+911 on campus in order to contact emergency personnel. **Just dial 911.**
- **Campus Security** should also be notified immediately by calling **extension 4000.**

Crisis Response Team (CRT)

- In case of an emergency of any kind, the first person notified is **Peggy Oldham, the Assistant Vice President for Student Development.** The chain of notification within the team flows from an organized Phone Tree Chart (listed as an **ADDENDUM I**). If an individual in the chain is either unavailable or is the subject or target of the crisis, the responsibility for continuing the chain rests with the next person in line or a back-up team member.
- The CRT is responsible for carrying out the Crisis Response Plan which outlines emergency procedures and campus operations during a crisis.

Crisis Communications Team (CCT)

- University Advancement staff members form the Crisis Communications Team. They will be put into effect as soon as possible after a situation has been deemed a crisis by the CRT.
- The CCT is responsible for carrying out necessary communications both internally and externally regarding the crisis situation, and for following up with members of the media after the crisis is over.
- *If power is out* and/or computer service is unavailable, the Director of Communications (**Carrie Crouch**) and/or **Web Publicist (Carlos Serrão)** may be working from **Switchboard Operator Pam Maynard’s** office (Pioneer Hall) as this room has several computers and will have power.

Official Campus Spokesperson

- During a crisis situation, MVNU's official spokesperson is **Keith Newman**, Vice President of University Relations.
- Having one spokesperson builds trust and credibility with our audiences. If a crisis is long-lasting, other individuals will be brought in as necessary.

Media Center

- A Media Center will be established in the **Free Enterprise Business Center (FEBC) Room 133 (the round room)** in the event of a widespread campus incident/disaster. The media center will include workspace for media personnel, electricity (if possible), telephones, Internet connections, campus and community directories and maps.
- The Media Center will be the designated spot for members of the media to receive the most up-to-the minute reports on the crisis situation. This information will be delivered by the campus spokesperson or other appropriate campus officials.
- Faculty, staff, and students should direct members of the media to this location.

Phone Hotline

- In the event of a crisis, MVNU will immediately install the MVNU Phone Hotline, which is campus **extension 5000**.
- This number will be posted on any official University communications and on the Web site in order that external entities and parents of students will know where to call.

Phone Bank

- A phone bank may also be established in the Couchenour House (manned by University Advancement staff), if a high volume of incoming phone calls is expected.
- The main switchboard lines will automatically roll over to the phone bank if deemed necessary.

Internal Communications (Faculty, Staff, Students)

- Internal audiences will receive regular updates by voicemail or e-mail as information becomes available and is able to be released.
- **TEXT MESSAGE** alert systems are also available for students, faculty, and staff. To sign up, log into my.mvnu.edu or call ext. 4421.
- Any information in messages that you receive from the MVNU Communications Office is what you may pass on to any members of the media who may ask you questions.
- The campus Web site will also be updated regularly with new information.
- In a campus emergency, **faculty, staff, and students have a right NOT to speak with the media**. The media has access only to the public areas, no residence halls, apartment units, or private offices. Any situations where individuals feel a reporter has abused their rights should be reported to the Director of Communications.
- For more guidelines and helpful hints in dealing with the media in a crisis situation, please see **ADDENDUM II**.

External Communications

- External communications includes parents of students, alumni, media, trustees, churches, educational organizations, and anyone else outside of the University.
- These communication efforts will be coordinated by the Director of Communications.

Campus Web Site:

- MVNU's main Web site, **www.mvnu.edu**, will contain a very obvious link on its home page where individuals both inside and outside the University may easily find the most up-to-date

information regarding a crisis. **Carlos Serrao** will be responsible for Web updates during a crisis. His back-up is **Sheila Wachtel, ext. 4227 or CELL (419) 560-0544**.

Adult and Graduate Studies:

- Because of the nature of its campus locations and leadership structure, Adult and Graduate Studies has its own Crisis Response Plan, which is a subset of this plan.
 - The AGS plan addresses the specialized needs of its students, faculty, and external constituencies.
 - **Dr. Keith Newman**, Vice President for University Relations, is the official spokesperson during an AGS crisis (followed by Dr Frank Johnson and Tim Eades).
 - See *SEPARATE PLAN FOR AGS*.
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PROCESS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS:

The Director of Communications, under the direction of the **Vice President of University Advancement** and the **Executive Director of Marketing**, is responsible for the development and dissemination of *most* University communications in the event of a campus emergency. This includes coordination of internal communications with students, faculty, and staff, as well as external communications with the media.

The MVNU Web site and e-mail system will be utilized as key mediums for updating our campus community and the public on the details of the emergency situation and actions we are taking to address all related issues.

- Prepare immediate statement(s) for switchboard, phone bank, e-mail, Web site, and voicemail. Provide continuous updates as soon as new information becomes available.
 - Inform internal audience of situation, providing as much information as possible. Provide continuous updates as soon as new information becomes available.
 - Work with senior administrators to craft messages for release to the media. If media are on campus, gather them in the Media Center (FEBC 133) where updates will be given on a regular time schedule (every half hour, every hour, etc.). Provide continuous updates as soon as new information becomes available.
 - Work with Official Spokesperson Keith Newman to prepare him for announcing information to the media.
 - Ensure crisis photography and video are being obtained by proper authorities.
 - Work to inform churches, board of trustees members, educational organizations, and fellow colleges and universities. These particular audiences are often of great help when it comes to providing assistance for our campus personnel in a crisis. They also provide prayer support.
 - Continue to craft messages for all audiences as crisis unfolds or as follow-up to the crisis.
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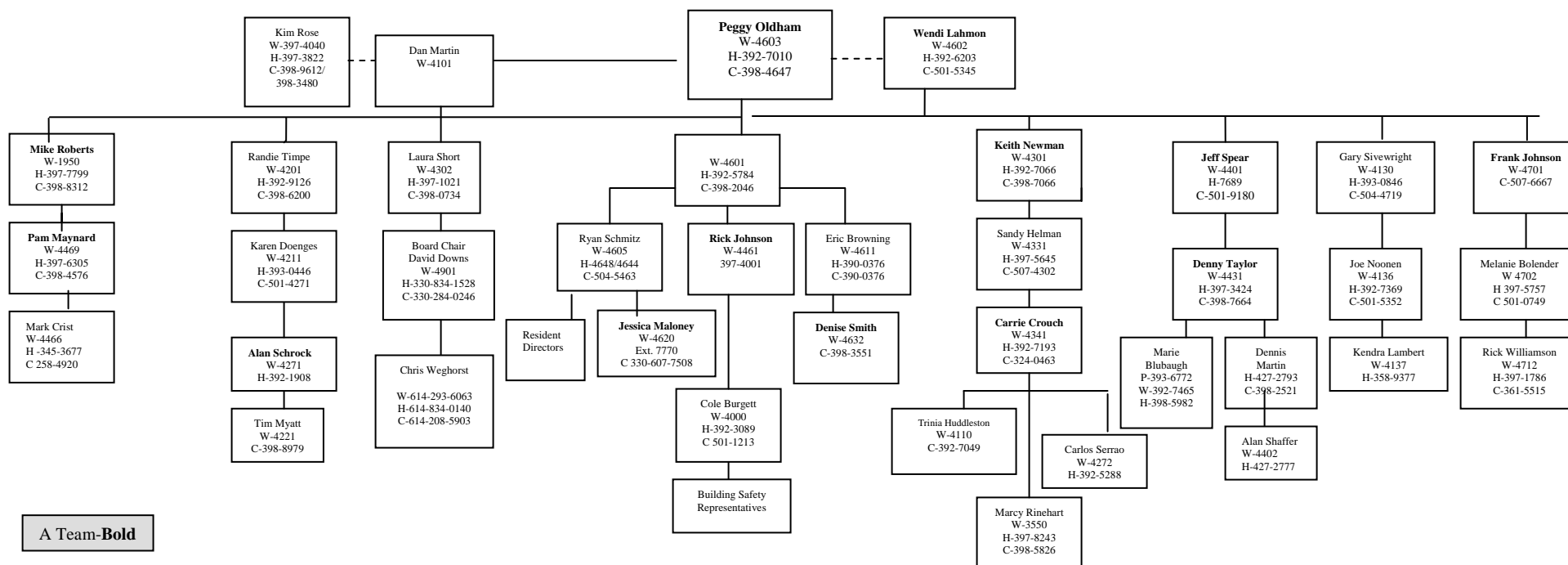
ADDENDUM I:

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM PHONE TREE
(4/15/2008)

FIRST RESPONDERS TO CALL 911 AS APPROPRIATE

When you are called, please call the person(s) immediately connected to your name.

If you reach a voice mail/answering machine, leave a message requesting a call back and continue to call down the list until you reach a live person. Then that person will call on down the list and repeat the process until everyone has been notified.



Mount Vernon Police Dept. 397-2222
Mount Vernon Fire Dept. 397-4444
Knox County Emergency Services Management Agency 393-6772
After 4:00 p.m. 397-2727

The **Crisis Response Executive Team** will meet in the Bailey Conference Room (HCC 207).
The **Cabinet** will meet in the Adult and Graduate Studies conference room (HCC).

ADDENDUM II:

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA:

In an emergency, the media is MVNU's most important link to the public. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with the media outlets is crucial to successful crisis communications.

Dos

- Give all media equal access to information. Don't favor one media outlet or organization over another.
- When appropriate, conduct press briefings and interviews. Give local and national media equal time.
- Try to observe all media deadlines.
- Escort media representatives when possible to ensure safety.
- Only give the media information that you have received through campus communications.
- Keep records of the information that was released and the date and time.
- Direct or take members of the media to the Media Center (FEBC 133).

Don'ts

- Do not offer speculations or gossip.
- Do **NOT** answer a reporter's question with "no comment." This only leads them to believe we are hiding something.
- Do not be condescending or underestimate the reporter's intelligence, but do make sure the reporter understands your responses.
- Remember you do **NOT** have to talk with a member of the media.
- Do not place blame for the incident.
- Do not cover up or mislead the media.

Private Information

Any media inquiries that involve information about specific students should be directed to the Vice President for Student Development or to the Director of Communications. Such inquiries will be handled in strict compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This federal law protects the confidentiality of a student's education record and some personal information.

Information that may be given includes information found in a directory: the student's full name, campus address and phone number, dates of attendance and degrees, honors and certificates received, class level (e.g. freshman), and academic major(s). Grades may only be provided to the media if a student wishes to release the information in connection with an award or scholarship (check with the Director of Communications to find out if student has given such permission).

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