

# Procedure Manual



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The following is a procedure for implementing a crisis communications plan. A crisis can be defined as either an emergency or non-emergency event.

## Emergency

An emergency crisis is any event or series of events that may physically threaten employees, students and property and includes loss of life or injury, or severe weather events.

## Non-Emergency

A non-emergency situation is an event that does not pose a direct physical threat to employees, students or property at Broward College. Non-emergency crises include intense media interest in the institution or a specific person, location or program of the college, a threat to the reputation or to the stature of the college, and a legal threat to the college.

Only at the direction of the president of the college or his designee will a crisis communications plan be activated. This activity will be implemented and coordinated by the special assistant to the president for public relations with the assistance and support of the coordinator of communications.

In a crisis it is important to remember two facts:

- 1) Both types of emergencies will make the news.
- 2) By law, the college may not disseminate any information about a student, an employee or a donor to the college or to the BC Foundation other than the fact that they are enrolled or employed, or have made a gift to the college or to the BC Foundation. There are three ways further information can be released;
  - If the employee or student or donor is sought out by the media and chooses to give more information about himself/herself
  - If the college is served a subpoena
  - If the college receives a request for information under the Florida Public Records statute or the Federal Freedom of Information Act, the request must be forwarded to the college's attorney, because selected information about an employee, a student or a donor still may not be released.

## Internal Communications

The appropriate college administrator (member of President's Cabinet) or their designees and the special assistant to the president for public relations will be made aware of any emergency or non-emergency that has the potential to become a communications crisis. The special assistant to the president for public

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relations will, in turn, notify the vice president for information technology and the associate vice president for enterprise application services.

Anyone who becomes aware of an emergency must inform his or her supervisor immediately. The supervisor will notify the provost or chief administrator of the location who, in turn, will notify the president of the college. The provosts or their designees are responsible for updating internal audiences as situations change.

### External Communications

All external communications in a crisis are made at the direction of the president or his designee. All media inquiries to employees of the college while, the communications crisis plan is in effect, are to be referred to and reported to the office of the special assistant to the president for public relations. A notice to this effect will be transmitted via collegewide email, or to campus- and location-based telephone trees through President's Cabinet, whichever is most appropriate.

### Broward College Authorized Spokespersons

The president of the college is the singular spokesperson for the college. He may designate others to speak for the college at his discretion in certain situations. In a crisis situation, no individual other than a designated spokesperson may speak officially on behalf of the college to the media. The college's designated spokesperson(s) may find it necessary in an emergency to coordinate BC's response with campus public safety personnel, municipal police personnel, Broward County Sheriff's personnel, and hospital officials.

### News Conferences/Interviews

News conferences should be used only in those situations where the information to be disseminated is significant and must be communicated quickly and efficiently to a large number of people at the same time. In a severe or lengthy emergency it may be necessary to conduct news conferences frequently.

The news conference will be arranged and structured by the special assistant to the president for public relations at the direction of the president. Only credentialed media may attend the news conference (including OBSERVER reporters). Credentialed media are those who have identification from the organization they represent, usually in the form of a laminated picture ID. It will be the responsibility of the coordinator of communications to check press credentials.

The college president or his designated spokesperson (depending upon the nature and/or location of the emergency) will serve as the primary spokesperson.

If appropriate, a prepared statement will be developed for the spokesperson by the special assistant to the president for public relations and/or the coordinator of communications.

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If appropriate, talking points will be developed for the spokesperson by the special assistant to the president for public relations and/or the coordinator of communications.

If a Q&A period is appropriate, it will be time-limited, with media required to identify themselves and the organizations they represent to be recognized by the spokesperson.

All news conferences will be recorded to check that media reporting is accurate and that the spokesperson is not misquoted. All television interviews with the president should be attended by the special assistant to the president for public relations or his/her designee. If incorrect information is reported following an interview or news conference, it is the responsibility of the special assistant to the president for public relations to ask for a correction.

## Media & Community Updates

Updated information will be given to the media as it occurs by the public relations department.

If the crisis is an emergency and lengthy, it is appropriate to establish a communications center as a follow-up to the news conference, where credentialed media can be updated as events develop.

If either sort of emergency disrupts the normal operation of a campus or location, timely information to the public will be provided through the collegewide hotlines and the college website, as well as through the media.

## Student Support

If the crisis is an emergency, a need may exist to have counselors available to provide up-to-date information to BC students and the parents of high school students attending classes operated at any of BC's locations. The vice president for student affairs or his designee will arrange this support.

## Media Escorts

As a public institution of the State of Florida, the media have the right to be on our campuses and at our locations. However, they do not have the right to arrive without notification, nor do they have the right to wander the campus without an escort. The special assistant to the president for public relations and/or the coordinator of communications should be notified of a request for media presence at any of our locations, and assist with the arrangements.

In an emergency, the chief administrator (or designee) at any BC location has the responsibility to act as a media escort. They will coordinate media arrival times with security.

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