2019 CoSIDA Convention: Division III Day
Welcome to Crisis Communication Plan: The Plan You Hope to Never Use

“Managing a crisis with a communications plan is like showing up for the big game without knowing who the opponent is or having a game plan.”

-Dan Millar, Ph.D. and Larry Smith Crisis Management and Communication
Panelists

• J.J. Nekoloff – ODAC - Associate Commissioner

• K.C. Culler – Pfeiffer University - Assistant AD for Athletic Communications

• Tim Volkmann – SUNY Geneseo - Director of Athletic Communications
For Discussion: Case Study #1

• A student-athlete punches another student-athlete during a game. The situation is handled on campus until video of the incident goes viral the next day.

• How do you handle it? First steps?
What Is A Crisis?

Definition
Any situation that is expected to lead to an unstable or dangerous situation.

Examples
• Legal situations
• Death or catastrophic injury
• Misconduct or discipline that impacts conference results or operations
• Natural disasters/weather
• Any situation needing action/response from conference or resulting in media attention.
Immediate Response

• Gather as much information as possible

• Decision Making
  – Who should be involved in decisions?
  – Take action

• Plan Communications
  – What communications are needed? Internal/external?
  – Develop timeline and order for communications
  – Craft clear and consistent messages from institution/conference
Internal Communications

• On Campus (Staff should have full details, clear roles and chain of command, and be available)
  – Athletic Director
  – Campus Director of Communications
  – Sports Information Director and staff
  – Other necessary staff

• Conference Office
  – Create consistent messaging (release, social media posts, etc...)

• NCAA
  – Decide if they need to be notified from compliance or communications standpoint.
External Communications

• Media
  – Be available
  – Be honest and allow them to do their job
  – Use it as an opportunity to build relationships
  – Use platform to communicate messages

• Press Releases/Announcements
  – Determine content, message
  – Be direct and in control of the message
External Communications

• **Interview protocols**
  – Craft talking points, share with all who could be interviewed, be consistent with message
  – Prepare for following questions: What happened? Why did it happen? How will you prevent it from happening again?
  – Define ground rules/terms for interviews
  – Cite parameters for questions you can’t answer
External Communications

• Public and Social Media
  – Share press release via web site and social media
  – Be strategic about additional social media communication/interaction
  – Share facts, avoid speculation/opinions No response is better than wrong response
Case Study #2

• Presidents vote to remove a school from their conference due to competitive parity.

• Knowing what you’ve learned, how do you handle this situation?
Post-Crisis Follow-Up

• Monitor Coverage and Response
  – Track on all media coverage and social media conversations

• Assess the Situation
  – Follow-up needed?
  – Evaluate strategy - What worked? What can we improve?

• Adapt Plan
  – Use each experience as a learning opportunity
Crisis Communication Plan Overview

• Have a plan
• Take action, communicate, review
• Always be prepared
• It’ll eventually blow over
Thank you for attending today’s panel!