



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!

