Communication Guidelines

Policy 302.2

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy is adopted to establish an effective and comprehensive system for the dissemination of information to the media and the general public during emergency situations and issues of public concern or controversy.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students as well as visitors to the campus or non-campus property.

3 Definitions

3.1 Emergencies

  include, but are not limited to, the following: fire or sudden disaster, power failure, civil defense, labor problems, and snow, ice, flood, and other weather related problems.

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 General Policy

4.1.1 The Chancellor and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, followed by the Director of the News Bureau, are the primary officials responsible and authorized to speak on behalf of the University. As the leader of the institution, the Chancellor will issue statements in conjunction with the Public Affairs Office/News Bureau. Only the Chancellor (or designee) or the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs and the Director of the News Bureau should release statements. In order to provide accurate information and avoid confusion during or following an emergency or campus incident, inquiries of all other officials shall be referred to one of the three officials identified above.

4.2 Campus Incidents

4.2.1 Campus incidents include, but are not limited to, the following: graffiti, defacement and destruction of University property, burglaries, weapons violations (gun discharge), death, including suicide, demonstrations, building occupation, riots, accident on University property with or without death or injuries, rape, thefts, and holdups. Should an "emergency" or "campus incident" occur, contact the Office of Public Safety and University Police.

4.2.2 The campus security desk officer should call the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs and the appropriate vice chancellor as the emergency is occurring. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs should be notified by the campus security desk officer if the emergency is student-related. The appropriate vice chancellor should notify the Chancellor.

4.2.3 If known, the following details of the incident should be provided:

1. How did the incident begin?
2. What is happening; have outside agencies been called?
3. Are there injuries or deaths? Have the injured been sent to the hospital and have there been any reports on their condition? If there are fatalities, how did they occur? (In this instance, the emphasis must be on specifics.)
4. Have the families of the injured or dead been notified? (Someone, preferably from the Student Affairs Office, should be sent to assist families in setting up waiting areas where they can stay in touch.)
5. When will the situation be cleared up?
6. When will all facts be available (i.e., investigation by police, fire, or city/state officials)?
7. Refer all media inquiries to the Public Affairs Office/News Bureau.
8. Given the gravity of a particular situation, the Chancellor (and others as designated), along with the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs and the Director of the News Bureau, should confer, determine the facts, and draft a factual release and inform the media.
9. Establish a media center -- a media center will be established at the Public Affairs/News Bureau Office, 803 Rivers Street. Telecommunications and work space will be made available to arriving media.
10. Maintain a record of information released -- all facts given to the media should be logged as to when this information became known and when it was released. This will help avoid duplication.
11. Do not release names of victims prematurely -- names of victims should never be released until the family has been notified. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs should be the source for providing this information to the Public Affairs/News Bureau. In situations involving faculty the information should come from the Provost's Office.

12. Avoid speculation -- never offer an unqualified opinion as to the cause of accidents, amount of damage, effect on University operations or employment. This will be established through official channels. Detailed information of this type will be available only after all the facts have been reviewed.

13. Avoid minimizing effects -- no matter how minor an incident may seem, it may be serious to the injured or their families.

14. Plan follow-up coverage -- soon after the crisis ends the University community should be reassured that the harmful effects have been minimized. The News Bureau will send out a release covering all aspects of the situation -- prevention against recurrences, aid to injured students, return to normal operations and a few words of thanks for any outside aid given during the crisis.

5 Additional References

6 Authority

7 Contact Information

8 Original Effective Date

9 Revision Dates