

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Columbia College Crisis Response Plan has been developed to provide guidance to college officials in mobilizing an effective, efficient and timely response to crisis situations that may occur. All members of the college community should be familiar with it—an effective response depends on having an informed campus community familiar with expectations and procedures for crisis preparedness and response.

Purpose

The purpose of the Crisis Response Plan is to serve as a guideline for implementing an effectual response to crisis situations. No plan can cover all scenarios in which emergency action may be needed; therefore, the plan is fluid and adaptable.

Crisis Response Team—Composition

In the event of a crisis, the President of the College has authorized the Crisis Response Team (CRT) to direct response activities. The following comprise the CRT:

- Dean for Campus Life, *co-chair*
- Director of Administrative Services, *co-chair*
- Assistant Dean for Campus Life/Director of Residential Life, *member*
- Director of Campus Safety, *member*
- Director of Counseling Services, *member*
- Director of Public Relations, *member*
- Associate Dean for Adult Higher Education, *member*
- Executive Vice President/Dean for Academic Affairs, *member*

Depending on the crisis, membership can/will be adjusted to include other campus administrators as needed.

Crisis Response Team—Responsibilities

If a crisis situation should occur on the home campus, the CRT will mobilize and decide all appropriate measures to be taken in response to the crisis. To this end, the CRT has developed its own detailed operational structure to guide its response.

The responsibilities of the CRT include, but are not limited to:

- Clarifying facts surrounding the crisis and their impact on personnel, students and campus operations
- Determining how to notify the campus community of the incident
- Deciding if additional support services are needed (for example, psychologists/counselors from the community)
- Directing internal and external communications content during and after the crisis
- Circulating throughout campus to act as support liaisons during crisis response
- Reminding faculty and staff to consult the ***Critical Incident Response Guidelines for Faculty and Staff***
- Overseeing the restoration of services

Crisis Response Team Priorities

Undoubtedly, each crisis situation will require its own unique response. The CRT's priorities, however, will remain the same no matter what crisis is occurring. In formulating its plan of action, the CRT will consider the following priorities:

- ***Priority One:*** Control the crisis/secure emergency assistance; evacuate affected areas of campus (as necessary); ensure injured/trapped people receive assistance; establish a communications network; survey critical areas—secure and/or clean up as needed.
- ***Priority Two:*** Secure additional supplies/resources/assistance as needed; evaluate facilities for occupancy—move residents or personnel as needed; establish a communications system with the campus community to announce information regarding services; establish police/security presence as needed; ensure psychological strains of crisis are tended to.
- ***Priority Three:*** Secure valuable college materials and records; survey academic departments and determine requirements for reopening operations; review flow of supplies, equipment and assistance from all sources; establish support networks/resources for faculty, staff, students and families of students.

Crisis Preparedness/Response by Functional Areas

In order to effectively respond to a crisis situation, the required resources, equipment, information and plans must be in place and each departmental unit must know its crisis response obligations.

All members of Administrative Council have been given both preparedness and response actions required of the various departments that report directly to them. The status of preparedness efforts is ongoing and requires constant monitoring and updating. All emergency-related equipment, such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers,

emergency exit alarms, sprinkler systems, two-way radio equipment, emergency call boxes and elevator equipment and telephones, are regularly tested throughout the year.

Responsibilities of Faculty, Staff and Students during a Crisis

All employees are issued a copy of the *Critical Incident Response Guidelines for Faculty and Staff*. Faculty and staff members should study this reference guide periodically and keep it in an accessible location for quick reference.

In addition, faculty instructors need to know evacuation procedures for each classroom where they teach. At the beginning of each semester, faculty members should study the evacuation routes posted in the buildings where they teach and figure out where they are to assemble their students in the event of an evacuation.

Emergency contact telephone numbers are posted in all classrooms. Faculty members who do not carry cell phones should identify a student with a cell phone who will allow the instructor to use it in an emergency situation.

In the event of a crisis, staff members may be expected to assist with response efforts related to their departmental responsibilities. Staff members eager to assist with emergency activities should contact their supervisors and/or the CRT to make themselves available.

As with faculty instructors, staff members must know the evacuation and assembly plans for their respective buildings so they can communicate this information to students or other visitors. In the event of an emergency, staff members should make it a priority to assist visitors and disabled students in their areas.

Students are responsible for following the directions of faculty and staff in charge during a crisis. Students should not leave assembly areas until permission has been granted. Buildings should not be re-entered until notification has been provided that it is safe to do so.

Communications Plan

Communication is important during a crisis situation. The College will make every effort to disseminate accurate and timely information to the public, the campus community and media.

Communicating Across Campus

The type of incident will dictate which kinds of communication can be used to reach the campus community. Communication systems include, but are not limited to:

- Fire alarm systems—can be activated to signal building evacuation

- Telephone intercom system—could be used to inform people that they should or should not leave their present locations (under exploration)
- Text messaging (under exploration)
- E-mail—can be sent regularly to faculty, staff and students alerting them to a crisis and telling them what actions they need to take
- 875-SHUT—will have a message concerning the crisis situation
- Website—a link on the College’s main page could allow people to obtain crisis-related information
- Two-way radios—located in Campus Safety, Administrative Services and Campus Life, these will be used by critical personnel to coordinate the crisis response
- Departmental liaisons—specific offices have been designated as the primary communications links between Campus Safety and building occupants. In an emergency, Campus Safety will alert liaison offices and individuals from these offices will notify students, faculty, staff and guests in their respective buildings of the action that needs to be taken—i.e. lockdown, taking shelter, evacuation. Departmental liaison offices will have bullhorns on hand to use for communicating with individuals in their buildings.

Communicating with the Greater Community

The Director of Public Relations & Marketing shall develop a framework for a communications plan involving the external community.

The Director of Public Relations will release all statements to the media. There also will be an official spokesperson, as designated by the president, the CRT co-chairs and the Director of Public Relations. No other employees are to disseminate information about the emergency to the media.

Educating the Campus Community about Crisis Response

The Crisis Response Plan also contains information related to evacuation and assembly procedures and how to handle specific types of emergency situations. It is important that members of the campus community know how and where to evacuate, as well as what to do in an earthquake, tornado, fire, bomb threat, etc. For this reason, students, faculty and staff will be educated regarding how to respond through various means throughout the year. Education will be via the most optimal means of getting the information to the intended recipient, such as campus memorandums, email notifications and specific training sessions.