



Administrative Procedure

Name/Subject	College Emergency/Crisis Communication
Procedure Number	902.02
Date Adopted	11/26/2024
Date(s) Reviewed/ Revised	

Purpose

Crisis communications have a lasting impact on institutional reputation and public support. How well we convey our message to the public greatly depends on what is reported to the news media. This is especially true in a crisis, during which the news media is the primary means of communication to our community. Because of the emotions that usually accompany crises, images formed from crisis reporting are especially important in shaping long-lasting public impressions of the institution.

In the event of a major crisis on campus, it is essential that an effective communication plan be put into effect to disseminate timely and accurate information and to ensure that inquiries are routed to the appropriate sources.

A major crisis does not include things like normal inclement weather changes and is something that cannot be managed using daily operating procedures.

External Communication

The College's Public Information Officer (PIO) or a designee, working in concert with the President, Campus Operations, and the Emergency Response Team, is responsible for the development of college communications in the event of a campus emergency. The President (or designee) and the PIO (or designee) are the only people authorized to speak to the media in an emergency. The College President (or designee) authorizes all information released to the media. The incident commander is authorized, to use GHC Alert and other emergency notification systems which may result in incidental communication to the public.

During a crisis, the communication priority will be on maintaining timely and open communications with the media, providing complete and corroborated information about the emergency situation and the College's response to the crisis at hand. Communications with the media will be as frequent as practical and useful throughout the duration of the emergency situation.

Internal Communication

Internal communications with students, faculty and staff should come from the President, PIO, and/or designated member(s) of the Emergency Response Team. In situations of imminent danger, the incident

commander may communicate messages via GHC Alert and other emergency notification systems as necessary to move individuals out of harm's way or to neutralize a situation.

The Vice President of Student Services (VPSS) or designee is responsible for communicating with students as well as with supplementary operations such as Wunderland Childcare Center, the Bishop Center, and Athletic events; and will do so in consultation with the PIO and President.

GHC Alerts, the GHC website, email, and/or GHC's main social media accounts will be utilized as a key media for updating our campus community and the public on the details of the emergency situation and actions we are taking to address all related issues. Employees should refrain from posting on College social media sites and instead only repost messages from the GHC main social media accounts. Such measures should be followed until emergency protocols are lifted.

Keeping in mind that only specified people are authorized to speak to the media, it is also important to remember that in a campus emergency faculty, staff, and students have a right **not** to speak with the media. Any situations where individuals feel a reporter has abused their rights should be reported to the PIO at publicrelations@ghc.edu.

A communication information center may also be established if a high volume of phone calls is expected as outlined in the Grays Harbor College Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Routine weather situations and other closures will be communicated via the GHC Alert system using protocols set up for such situations.

Primary Social Media Accounts

In the event of an emergency, the following are considered the college's primary social media accounts:

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ghcollegewa>
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/graysharborcollege>
- **X (Twitter):** <https://twitter.com/ghcollegewa>