

Washington State University Vancouver

Crisis Management and Communication Plan

*October 2020
Kenia Garnica-Avila*

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Escalation Framework	3
Incident Response Team	5
<i>First Line of Defense</i>	5
<i>Greater Response Team</i>	5
Roles and Responsibilities	6
<i>Crisis Communication Response Bank</i>	7
<i>Guiding Principle</i>	7
<i>Communication Channels</i>	7
<i>Example responses</i>	8

Purpose

Washington State University Vancouver’s crisis communication plan outlines the action steps and persons responsible for integrating and implementing these steps at the appropriate time. This plan creates a structure for communicating with internal stakeholders in the event of a crisis that affects the normal functions of the university.

Escalation Framework

Level	Description	Action
Level 1	<p><i>Involves a new wave/relapse of COVID-19 among students, faculty and staff.</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many students get COVID-19 despite vaccination and is spreading. -Emergency closure. 	<p><i>Marketing & Communications Team:</i> Assess the situation, working closely with Clark County Public Health to ensure the public remains safe and spreading of the illness is limited to none. Release a press release about the situation to make sure there is not false information spreading.</p> <p><i>Chancellor:</i> Work alongside the Marketing & Communications team to release a statement for internal audiences via email and possibly through a town hall (virtual).</p> <p><i>Department of Public Safety:</i> Maintain WSU Vancouver Alert system up to date and monitor attendance on campus—especially if students should not be on campus.</p>
Level 2	<p><i>There are issues with the vaccine verification process or proving medical exemption due to overwhelming about of vaccinations being given and verification paperwork being request.</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students, staff or faculty are unable to come back to campus because the clinic/hospital has not been able to update/provide students with vaccine verification paperwork. -WSU Vancouver may have a disorganized verification system and may not be able to get students, staff and faculty back on campus accordingly. 	<p><i>Marketing & Communications Team:</i> Send out a press release about the situation and post on social media to assure audience that everything is being done to correct the setback while still considering the health of the community.</p> <p><i>Chancellor:</i> Work alongside the Marketing & Communications team to release a statement for internal audiences via email and possibly through a town hall (virtual).</p> <p><i>Department of Public Safety:</i> Make sure anyone coming on campus has the proper verification/exemption paperwork and escort those who do not off campus.</p>

Level 3	<p><i>Students, faculty and staff having suspicions about the efficiency of the vaccine, COVID-19 relapse, etc.</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refusal to get vaccine. - Students not wanting to return to campus. - Individual students or members for the staff or faculty coming back to campus with COVID-19 symptoms and not taking the necessary precautions, concerning their peers. 	<p>Marketing & Communications Team: Provide messaging support for other teams and individuals. Work with Clark County Public Health to address concerns.</p> <p>Chancellor: Address the issue in a statement or letter for internal audiences via email and possibly through a town hall.</p> <p>Greater Response Team: Bring in necessary departments and individuals to provide support or to ensure internal audiences feel heard and protected.</p>
Level 4	<p><i>Students, faculty and/or staff not taking the same necessary precautions in the transition months back on campus.</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of mask wearing. -Lack of frequent handwashing/ hand sanitizer-use. -Not taking other appropriate preventative measures. 	<p>Marketing & Communications Team: Address the issue on social media, on website and coordinate with faculty and staff to discuss this issue in class appropriately.</p> <p>Chancellor: Send out a statement through email for internal audiences and work with Marketing & Communications.</p> <p>Greater Response Team: Provide support and resources to students, faculty and staff and help de-escalate certain situations.</p>

Incident Response Team

The Incident Response team is made up of WSU Vancouver leaders and appropriate departments to evaluate and identify the crisis plan. This team is responsible for coordinating with each department and individual in the First Line of Defense and Greater Response Team about initial steps in response to a crisis and how to proceed.

First Line of Defense

- ***Person/Team #1:*** Marketing and Communications, brenda_alling@wsu.edu, 360-546-9601
- ***Person/Team #2:*** Chancellor Mel Netzhammer, mel.netzhammer@wsu.edu, 360-546-9581
- ***Person/Team #3:*** Department of Public Safety, 360-546-9001
- ***Person/Team #4:*** ASWSUV, aswsuv.dc@vancouver.wsu.edu, 360-546-9523
- ***Person/Team #5:*** Clark County Public Health, 360-397-8021
- ***Group Email/Communication Method:*** Group email, Alert system

Greater Response Team

The Greater Response Team will be involved in Level 3-4 crises. Teams that make up the Greater Incident Response Team include the following:

- Marketing and Communications
- WSU Vancouver Chancellor
- Chancellor's Office Staff
- ASWSUV
- Department of Public Safety
- Human Resources
- Student Wellness Center
- Academic Affairs

Note: Other departments or individuals not listed above may be brought in as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Team	Contact Name	Roles and Responsibilities
Marketing & Comm	Brenda Alling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal and External messaging</i> • <i>Work with necessary teams or individuals to issue a statement/letter</i> • <i>Assess the level of crisis with the First line of Defense</i>
Office of the Chancellor	Mel Netzhammer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal messaging, town halls, emails</i> • <i>Assess the level of crisis with the First line of Defense</i>
Dept. of Public Safety	WSU Vancouver Incident Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal messaging, alert system</i> • <i>Assess the level of crisis with the First line of Defense</i> • <i>Help de-escalate situations on campus</i>
ASWSUV	ASWSUV President Mando Antonino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emails, town halls, social media updates</i> • <i>Be the voice for students and what resources should be provided for them in a crisis</i>
Student Wellness Center	Dr. Patience McGinnis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Student support and resources</i>
Human Resources	Julia Getchell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Faculty and staff communication</i> • <i>Be present when there are important faculty/staff discussions being held</i> • <i>Help de-escalate situations on campus</i>
Academic Affairs	Renny Christopher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide guidance in transition to in-person class from online learning (and vice versa)</i> • <i>Manage and assess efficiency of class learning throughout these transitions</i>

Crisis Communication Response Bank

Guiding Principle

This document serves as a guide for responding appropriately in crisis situations. The response bank provides initial, brief responses that are meant to be issued in the earliest stages after a crisis situation. It is important to remain consistent with WSU brand standards, follow media guidelines and communicate in a professional and friendly manner. Responses should not include unnecessary jargon and should be inclusive of all WSU Vancouver-affiliated persons.

Communication Channels

External

- Website
- Social Media
- Forums/Town Hall

Internal

- Email
- Classrooms/Professors
- Text alerts

Verification Process Delay

We are currently receiving many vaccination verification forms and although we are updating our system as quickly as we can to get students, faculty and staff back on campus safely, there have been some setbacks that are delaying this process. We acknowledge your concern with the pace of the verification process and wish to assure you that Washington State University Vancouver is committed to the health and safety of its students, faculty and staff and it will remain a top priority as we move forward with the verification process. We will be holding a Town Hall on [date] to discuss updates and answer any questions you may have. We apologize for the unexpected setback and thank you for your patience. We hope to see you all in person soon.

COVID-19 Relapse

On Friday [date], two WSU Vancouver students who attend class on campus reported that they tested positive for COVID-19. Both students have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and have experienced COVID-19 symptoms leading up to their test. These individuals will be staying home for the minimum of 10 days following CDC isolation guidance. To ensure the safety and health of all WSU Vancouver-affiliated persons, we ask that if you are experiencing symptoms, please visit the local clinics or hospitals listed below to get tested free of charge and stay home in the meantime. WSU Vancouver faculty will be offering class through Zoom for those who are experiencing symptoms and need to stay home. Please email COVID-19.info@wsu.edu with any questions or concerns.

[Place list of testing sites here]

Suspensions of Vaccine

Many students have stressed their wariness over the effectiveness of the vaccine and are worried about returning to full classrooms. We acknowledge your concerns of the new COVID-19 vaccine and the monitoring of it on campus, and we want to assure you that the health of all students, faculty and staff is a top priority. We are working closely with Clark County Public Health to monitor this vaccine in the area. We will be hosting a Town Hall on [date] with the Clark County Health Officer to answer any and all questions regarding the preventative measures in place and any updates that need to be discussed. You will be able to submit questions beforehand in the following email.

Lack of Preventative Safety Measures

We have received many reports from faculty and staff about the lack of mask wearing on campus. We want to make sure all students, staff and faculty feel comfortable and safe on the WSU Vancouver campus and adhere to the necessary precautions such as mask wearing for the rest of the month. As the new COVID-19 vaccine is still being monitored in Clark County, we want to make sure we are taking care of ourselves and our peers and remain on campus for in-person learning in the safest way possible. We would like to thank you for your flexibility during this time.