

*Public Relations and Marketing*

# **BARTON**

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

# CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

Written: July 2014

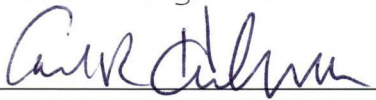
Revised: September 2015

Primary contact: Public Relations Director  
Brandon Steinert - **(620) 617-4163**

Secondary contact: Public Relations Specialist  
Joe Vinduska - (620) 792-9308

Acknowledgments:

Date



10/15/15

President



10/18/15

Vice President



9/30/15

Dean of Administration



10/26/15

Director of Public Relations

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# INTRODUCTION

Crises are not situations to ponder “if” as much as “when.”

It may be tempting to think, “it can’t happen here,” but it can. And when a crisis does strike, the effectiveness of our response will determine how much damage is done. The key is preparation.

This crisis communication plan is supplemental to Barton’s [“Emergency Operations Plan” \(EOP\)](#). It will guide any Barton employee on the proper course of action depending on the nature of an emergency. However, this document is primarily intended to guide the Crisis Communication Team.

Please place this document and the EOP in multiple easy-to-access locations like your car, home and office. It might be wise to bookmark the campus safety website or keep a digital copy on your smartphone or other device as well.

Once again I would like to reiterate, the safety of our Barton family in the event of a crisis relies heavily on our ability to respond effectively. Please familiarize yourself with Barton’s emergency procedures in this plan and the Emergency Operations Plan.

Thank you for your time,

- Dr. Carl Heilman, President, Barton Community College

# PURPOSE

To initiate communication with appropriate parties to provide accurate, complete and timely information to the public and the media in the event of a crisis. Communications will seek to restore and maintain a positive image of Barton among its publics. Communications with the media or other publics should be open, honest and frequent.

# OBJECTIVE

To be perceived in the news media as a community-focused organization that genuinely cares about its employees, students and stakeholders. Barton Community College values and protects students, faculty and staff above all else, and will exhaust all measures to ensure their well-being.

# QUICK GUIDE

**In the event of a crisis or emergency, the EOP states that the Director of Public Relations must be contacted. That will set in motion the following steps:**

1. Director will decide severity of crisis and extent to which communication must occur.
  - A Level 1 emergency requires minimal staff, likely only the Director of Public Relations and/or PR Specialist. Crises of this nature are not likely to require media notification, but a Crisis Communication Team member should be standing by.
  - A Level 2 emergency requires at least the Director of Public Relations and PR Specialist to respond. Most of these emergencies will require communication with the media, though select cases will be handled internally, leaving the CCT to damage control. More staff can be engaged if the crises escalates.
  - A Level 3 emergency requires the full CCT to engage. These are the primary crises for which this plan was written.

**[Refer to page 11 of [EOP](#) for Emergency Levels]**

2. Director will assemble the appropriate members of the Crisis Communication Team and determines spokesperson, which in almost all occasions should be the President. The President and Director of Public Relations may designate an alternate spokesperson.
3. The EOP and Crisis Communication Plan are reviewed and emergency notification options are determined and implemented if necessary, including RAVE notifications. Front desk operators should also work with CCT to craft standard messages.
4. In most crises requiring media notification, a news release and “quick facts” sheet should be written and delivered within one hour of Director being notified. At this time, an update to the website at [bartonccc.edu/emergency](http://bartonccc.edu/emergency), and posts to social media should also be considered, providing the same basic information as in the release. If deemed necessary, Coordinator of Video can shoot video and upload to news media or potentially stream live via YouTube. A press conference may also be scheduled. Direct all inquiries to visit [bartonccc.edu/emergency](http://bartonccc.edu/emergency) for updates.
5. The CCT fields calls and responds to online comments and emails. In the attached template or excel file in the CRISIS INFO folder, each call should be documented, including time, length, name of caller, inquiries and if the problem was resolved, or where the person was directed.
6. PR Specialist or designated writer begins work on collecting more information for a second release to be issued, usually within two hours of the previous release.
7. CCT uses any available time to review the Crisis Communication Plan and discuss the best messages and avenues for keeping individuals safe and/or protecting and repairing Barton’s image, depending on the severity of the crisis and progress toward a resolution.

# REHEARSALS

The following potential crises shall be rehearsed every six months on a rotation as defined below. The Crisis Communication Team shall also meet to review this plan in March and September.

Rehearsals will occur at random during the first two weeks of June and the first two weeks of December.

The time to be spent on a rehearsal ranges anywhere from two to five hours, allowing time for review and discussion.

Prior to the drill, administration will be notified so others on campus may participate or benefit from the drill. Barton's outreach campuses will also have the option of participating.

- **Tornado** (*even years in June*)
- **Drug Abuse / Trafficking** (*even years in December*)
- **Workplace Violence** (*odd years in June*)
- **Transportation Accident** (*odd years in December*)  
(For example, if some or all of our administrators were injured or killed while traveling together to a ceremony or conference.)

\*\* Initial tornado response will be reviewed each time the campus participates in a tornado drill. This was determined to be the most likely crisis by survey respondents.

\*\* The complete list of potential crises in this document will be reviewed and discussed after each rehearsal to ensure some degree of readiness for our less likely or less damaging crises.

# COMMUNICATION TEAM (CCT)

The Crisis Communication Team (CCT) will be composed of the following. The order implies who will serve as leader in event that not all are present.

**Brandon Steinert**

- Director of Public Relations (lead) o: (620) 792-9307

**Joe Vinduska**

- Public Relations Specialist (back-up lead) o: (620) 792-9309

**Julie Munden**

- Video Coordinator o: (620) 792-9305

**Samantha Stueder**

- WebMaster o: (620) 792-9354

**Tana Cooper**

- Director of Admissions o: (620) 792-9241

**Wendy Rodriguez - Switchboard Operator in Admission office**

- Operator o: (620) 792-9286

**Larissa Graham**

- Child Development Center o: (620) 786-1131

## CCT Control Room

The control room will ideally be the Public Relations Department offices at C-129. A back-up control room would be in the Administration Building.

If both locations are inaccessible or unusable, see page 12 of the [Emergency Operations Plan](#).

If campus is inaccessible or destroyed and communications are down, the back-up control room will be set up in the Adult Education Center at 1025 Main in Great Bend.

## Equipment/Supplies

The control room already contains the necessary equipment. However, if a new control room has to be established. This is a basic rundown of what is needed:

- Computers
- Internet access
- Flashlights
- Walkie-talkies
- Contact lists
- Pens/pencils/paper
- Copy machine
- Television(s) with major news networks
- Copy of the Emergency Operations Plan
- Ample food
- Cameras
- Extension cords & a generator and/or a power pack
- Copies of college policies & procedures

# KEY PUBLICS TO CONSIDER

Board of Trustees

Administrators

Employees

County Commission & The Local City Councils

Area School Boards

Community Leaders (civic groups)

Stakeholders (General Public, Taxpayers & Community Members)

Students (On Campus, Online, Commuting)

Vendors & Suppliers

Bissell Point Residents

Competitors (Perhaps a Source of Assistance)

Legal Representation

Local & State News Media

Chambers of Commerce

Education Center Administrators (forts)

Education Consortium Members (forts)

Parents of children at the Child Development Center

Foundation Board of Directors



# NOTIFYING PUBLICS

The following are the preferred methods for reaching each of the aforementioned publics, along with the party or parties responsible for reaching them.

Depending on this crisis, hybrids of one or more of the methods might be considered. This list is not a hard-and-fast rule. It is a guide meant to help the college's Crisis Communication Team leave no stone unturned.

## **Director of Public Relations:**

Crisis Communication Team + Executive Director of Institutional Advancement

Phone; Text

Administrators + Education Center Administrators

Email Via President's Staff List; Phone; Text

Board of Trustees

Email; Phone; Text

Local & State News Media

Email; Phone

## **Public Relations Specialist (with optional assistance from Director):**

County Commission & The Local City Councils

Email; Phone

Area School Boards

Email; Phone

Community Leaders (civic groups)

Email; Phone; Meeting Attendance

Stakeholders (General Public, Taxpayers & Community Members)

Paid Social Media; News Media; Barton Website

## **Director of Admissions**

Students (On Campus)

Students (Commuting)

Students (Online)

Social Media; Email; Bulk Text; Campus Intercom; Barton Website

Employees

Email; Bulk Text; Campus Intercom

## **Director of Child Development Center**

Parents of CDC children

Social media; Phone; Email

## **To Be Designated By Director at time of crisis if necessary:**

Vendors & Suppliers

Bissell Point Residents

Competitors (Perhaps a Source of Assistance)

Legal Representation

Chambers of Commerce

# EMERGENCY NUMBERS

AMBULANCE	911
AMERICAN RED CROSS	800-784-3272
BARTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPT	793-1902
BARTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE	793-1876
BARTON COUNTY YARDS (Streets, roads, etc.)	793-1816
BOMB SQUAD	911
CLARA BARTON HOSPITAL	653-2114
ELLINWOOD DISTRICT HOSPITAL	564-2548
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	800-424-8802
GREAT BEND REGIONAL HOSPITAL	792-8833
GREAT BEND FIRE & EMS	911
HAYS MEDICAL CENTER	785-623-5000
HUTCHINSON HOSPITAL	665-2000
KANSAS DEPT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT	785-296-1500
KANSAS DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES	785-296-3959
KANSAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY	785-274-1911
KBI	800-512-7463
KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL	785-296-6800
LARNED CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY	285-6249
ELLSWORTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	(785) 472-5501
POISON CONTROL	800-222-1222
SALINA REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER	785-452-7000
SAINT ROSE AMBULATORY & SURGICAL CENTER	792-6503
UTILITIES: ELECTRIC (Midwest)	792-1301
GAS (Kansas Gas Service)	888-482-4950

# KEY MEDIA

Media lists will be maintained by the Public Relations Department. The lists are currently viewable via an Outlook contacts group.

The groups should occasionally be exported to the designated Dropbox folder entitled "Crisis Info," which is shared only among the Crisis Communication Team.

The contacts should be re-exported after each regularly scheduled rehearsal to ensure they are up to date.

## **Traditional Media**

The primary media entities with which Barton maintains relationships are:

KSN (Molly Hadfield is our beat reporter)

Great Bend Tribune (Susan Thacker is our beat reporter)

Great Bend Post & Eagle Radio (Cole Reif & Steve Webster)

Rocking M Radio (Darren Irwin)

Post Rock Radio (Claudia Elsen)

Fort Riley / GVP

Junction City Daily Union & First Infantry Division Post (Tim Hobbs)

Manhattan Broadcasting (Ashley Allenpina)

Eagle Radio of Junction City/Manhattan (Valerie Guy)

Morale Welfare & Recreation (Meredith Storm)

Fort Leavenworth

Leavenworth Times & Fort Leavenworth Lamp (Kristen Frey)

Morale Welfare & Recreation (Mary Manago)

## **Social Media**

Social media has given the college new, faster ways to reach its constituents. The CMT should consider placing paid ads and boosted posts. These have frequently reached as many or more individuals as the circulation or viewership of local media entities listed above.

## **Other**

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce may also be a valuable resource for crises affecting businesses or our many business partnerships.

The digital signs throughout town, which are controlled by Eagle Radio and the City of Great Bend, might also be a useful resource, in addition to our own sign on the highway.

# MEDIA SPOKESPERSON

The media spokesperson will depend upon the crisis. However, for most major crises, the most appropriate spokesperson should be the President, unless the President and Director of Public Relations decide to designate an alternate spokesperson to make the message more relevant or credible depending on the crisis.

The spokesperson will be the face of "Barton" to the public, in a very real sense. If we have an expert more qualified to discuss the effects of a particular crisis, it would be wise to seek an audience with that person for an interview.

Prior to any statements, the spokesperson should be briefed and prepared and should rehearse. The Director will instruct the spokesperson on the most likely questions that will be encountered.

If there are potential legal ramifications, legal counsel should be sought before drafting of a statement.

See "key messages" on next page for guidelines.

## Other Spokespersons

Representatives from the following organizations may also be considered depending on the scope of the crisis (i.e. community colleges in general rather than Barton-specific.)

Barton County Health Department

Kansas Board of Regents

Local Law Enforcement / Emergency Response Personnel

Local Government Officials

School Boards

Involved Business Owners (advisory board members, etc.)

Education Center Administrators (forts)

Legal Counsel - Randy Henry

# KEY MESSAGES

Remember the 5Ws & H. Who, what, when, where, why and how.

The Director of Public Relations will work with the spokesperson on drafting key generic statements that can be used to answer likely questions from the media.

For catastrophic crises, among the first questions asked will be related to number of injuries or deaths, the amount of damage done in terms of dollars and how we have responded to the situation.

While all messages should state only what is known, *it is particularly important to stick to the facts* with the first messages released. This is where misinformation has the most potential to be spread among our publics. Only say what is known - do not speculate!

"You don't have to explain what you don't say."

- Marlin Fitzwater, former U.S. Press Secretary.

**That doesn't mean we should say nothing. Here is a short list of what we should say:**

- Our message should be concise, explaining what we know, and that we are gathering the facts about what we don't know.
- We should explain how and when more information will be disseminated. If possible, a regularly scheduled update should be provided, regardless of whether there is any new information.
- When new information becomes available, we should determine whether it is yet appropriate to notify the media. [See page 19 of EOP.](#)
- Barton does not release names of deceased. We refer media to local authorities.
- Mention the place the public can go to find more information.
- Use plain English - cut out any jargon.

The Director of Public Relations will provide a **quick-reference sheet** to contain the following:

- 3-5 of the most likely questions
- List of "quick facts"
- 3-5 pre-formatted messages
- Issues to avoid and/or address
- Tips on working with specific reporter(s) conducting the interview

# TRICK QUESTIONS

During a press conference or interview, reporters may intentionally or unknowingly ask trick questions. From loaded to leading, trick questions come in a variety of types.

“Off the record” - There is no such thing as “off the record.”

Reporters may go off topic and assume a variety of answers they will try to get you to subtly and accidentally confirm. Beware of “Isn’t it true...” and “Don’t you know...” and “If this had happened elsewhere or at a different time...”

These are usually the beginnings to trick questions. Stick to the facts. Call out reporters on being off topic if necessary. They won’t be offended and you will appear more competent.

Speculative questions:

“If x had happened, what would you have done.”

- Fortunately, that didn’t happen, so let’s please keep the questions germane.

Leading questions:

“You do agree that Barton was at fault, right?”

- My opinion is not what is important right now. Please keep questions focused on gathering facts.

Naive questions:

“What exactly does Barton do?”

- For basic information about Barton, please check out the website or contact the public relations department.

Good-bye questions

- These sound innocent, and come after an interview. Be careful how you answer. Anything you say is on the record.

# WEBSITE

Keeping information front-and-center on the relevant Barton website(s) will keep phone calls and other communications to a minimum. This is often the first place people will look.

- 1) The relevant Barton website(s) should be immediately updated with the initial news release on the home page.
- 2) The image sliders should be replaced with one static image or message pertaining to the crisis. It should link to [bartonccc.edu/updates](http://bartonccc.edu/updates).
- 3) The online news release should be updated regularly. Other releases should not replace it, simply update the contents of the page.
- 4) If deaths or injuries have occurred, provide a place where people who are unharmed can check in to say they are OK where family and friends can look them up. A Google Form might be a quick way to set this up. That way the names can be sorted alphabetically and the public can view names as they are entered in real-time.
- 5) For crises affecting the entire institution, all Barton's websites should be updated in this fashion with a link to the information, but the news release should still remain on one page.
- 6) As soon as possible, if determined necessary, a video statement from the President should be placed on the home page and wherever else possible (embedded in the news release page, etc.) This will involve assistance from the Video Coordinator.

# MONITORING

At least one individual should be dedicated to monitoring chatter about the issue.

## **Effective monitoring includes:**

- Flipping through television channels.
- Google News-searching the college's name and keywords associated with the crisis.
- Checking the local news websites as follows:
  - Great Bend Tribune
  - Ellinwood Leader
  - Hoisington Dispatch
  - Larned Tiller & Toiler
  - Lyons News
  - KSN/KWCH and other major Kansas and national news networks
  - Great Bend Post
- Listening to the local radio stations.

A report of findings should be generated every half hour and presented to the Director of Public Relations. The individual responsible for monitoring should record findings throughout the process, including elements as follows:

- time.
- nature of the message.
- where the information was published.



# PRODROMES

Prodromes are the warning signs that a crisis may occur.

Due to confidentiality needs and the specificity of some previous occurrences, this list is kept separate from the CCP in the Crisis Communication Team's shared dropbox folder titled "Crisis Info." This list will be shared with administration and human resources.

Prodromes are updated each time the CCP is reviewed and whenever a prodrome is recognized.

## RELATED WEBSITES

### **Key Barton Sites**

[www.bartonccc.edu](http://www.bartonccc.edu)  
[emergency.bartonccc.edu](http://emergency.bartonccc.edu)  
[news.bartonccc.edu](http://news.bartonccc.edu)

### **Weather Channel**

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### **Kansas Legislature**

[www.kslegislature.org/li/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/)

### **Fort Riley**

<http://www.riley.army.mil/>

### **Fort Leavenworth**

<http://garrison.leavenworth.army.mil/>

### **Visit Great Bend**

[www.greatbendks.net](http://www.greatbendks.net)

### **Great Bend Regional Hospital**

[www.gbregional.com](http://www.gbregional.com)

### **Great Bend Chamber of Commerce**

[www.greatbend.org](http://www.greatbend.org)

### **Barton County**

[www.bartoncounty.org](http://www.bartoncounty.org)

### **Center for Disease Control**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# NEWS RELEASE

The initial news release should be released within an hour of the Director of Public Relations receiving notice of a crisis. It should contain the following information:

- What - Tell what happened.
- Who - Explain who was involved. Provide information on whether individuals have been hospitalized for any reason. Names are not to be released by Barton. They may be used if released by local authorities first.
- When - List the time the crisis occurred and when emergency teams arrived and which ones responded. Include a time stamp on the news release.
- Where - Provide an address.
- Explain that Barton is regrouping to focus on keeping people safe and contain the damage.
- If sensitive information is at play, contact legal counsel and leave out such information for the time being.
- Avoid jargon. Keep it simple.

## Follow-up News Release

The follow-up news release should be released within two hours after the initial release. It should contain the following information:

- A repeat of the information sent previously.
- Updates to any numbers regarding those injured, safe or evacuated.
- Quotes from the President or other administrator regarding the crisis and our immediate next step. Good practice is generally to thank emergency response personnel if all has gone well.

# CLOSURE

When the crisis is determined to be over or nearing an end, consider the following actions and determine if they are appropriate:

Paid advertising containing an apology or final details.

Putting apology/final details on all communication channels.

Final statement to media.

Video apology/final details on home page.

Explain in apology/final details how future incidents will be handled/prevented.

# Evaluation

The following should take place within 24 hours of the end of a crisis:

Compile the reports from monitoring media and phone calls.

Determine effectiveness and whether CCT response could have been better.

Review list of publics and key media to determine if any should be added.

Report findings when Emergency Response Team holds a debrief session as mandated by the [Emergency Operations Plan](#).

# CRISES INVENTORY

The following is a list of crises. Those in bold were determined to be “Possible” with potential to cause “Considerable Damage [and newsworthy].”

The scales ranked from Impossible to Highly Probable, and from No Damage to Devastating. The scores from several individuals were averaged to determine perceived level of threat from each crisis.

Some non-bold items may be potentially devastating, but nearly impossible, while others may be highly probable, but with little damage anticipated. On a scale of 1-5, both the likelihood and potential damage must have been at 3.5 or higher. In some cases, the Director of Public Relations may take liberty to be more conservative if a crisis is almost at 3.5 or higher on both scales.

Age Discrimination

Alcohol Abuse

Bankruptcy

Boycott

Bribery

Chemical Spill / Leak

**Computer Failure**

**Computer Hacking**

Contamination

Data Loss / Theft

Downsize Operations

**Drug Abuse**

**Drug Trafficking**

Earthquake

Embezzlement

Explosion

**Fatality**

**Fire**

Flood

Kidnapping

**Lawsuits**

**Layoffs**

Merger

Murder

**Negative Legislation**

Protest Demonstrations

**Robbery**

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Discrimination

Strikes

**Suicide**

Tax Problems

Terrorism

**Tornado**

**Transportation Accident**

**Workplace Violence** (Student or Employee)

**NOTE:** [See pages 23-31 in the EOP](#) for further resources specific to each crisis.

# OUTREACH SITES

The forts, Grandview Plaza and BARTonline are referenced throughout the document. While the unique needs of each constitute their own special responses, this document has been adjusted to serve as a useful guide regardless of location.

**Fort Riley Crisis Leader:** Dean of Military Academic Services

Ashley Arnold: o: (785) 620-6606 c: (785) 492-0658

**Backup:** Administrative Assistant

Arlette Stratton: o: (785) 239-9769 c:

**Fort Leavenworth Crisis Leader:** Director of Fort Leavenworth Learning Services

Lee Miller: o: (855) 509-3374 c: (316) 737-0113

**Backup:** See Fort Riley Crisis Leader above

### Crisis Communication Call Log

Name of Caller	Phone Number	Email	Call notes