



VIII-21.00 POLICY ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT

(Approved by the Board of Regents on November 22, 2019)

I. PURPOSE

Best practice in effective governance at both an institution and System-wide level, requires that management have a process for responding to events considered to be a crisis.

This policy formalizes expectations that each University System of Maryland institution and regional higher education center, including the System Office, and the chancellor on behalf of the University System generally, establish a process and set of protocols and steps for use in responding to events that each level considers a crisis, as defined below.

II. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Each President shall develop protocols for use in responding to and communicating when a crisis arises. Board of Regents Policy VI-13.00 formalizes requirements associated with campus emergency planning, preparedness, and response. An emergency, depending on the impact and exposure, operationally, in terms of public safety, and reputationally, may also be considered a crisis within the meaning of this policy and require additional coordination and consultation, public communication, and response and recovery.

A crisis is defined as:

1. A negative event that was unanticipated and for which plans had not been formulated,
2. A negative event that had been planned for, but happened at a rate or pace unanticipated,
or
3. A confluence of events anticipated and planned for individually, but not in combination.

The University System Office will provide guidance to support each President developing a crisis management process for their university appropriate for that university, that, at minimum, includes clear reporting and escalation, response structure and team roles, and crisis communications.

Each institution, and the System as a whole, are to develop crisis communication plans that detail who is responsible for communications in the event of particular events, and a general plan for events not anticipated.

Care should be taken to ensure that crisis communications considers and includes students, faculty, staff, and other identified institution and System interested parties. Once a crisis management process has been developed by an institution, periodic testing of the process in response to a potential crisis should be carried out to ensure that all involved at an institution in crisis management understand roles, protocols, and processes. The process should be reviewed and refined after any actual crisis event, if appropriate, to improve institutional responses and communications.

In the event of a crisis, immediate notification to the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Communications is to happen as soon as is practical under the circumstances, even if all the facts and considerations are not yet known. The Chancellor will communicate with the Chair of the Board of Regents to provide an understanding of the event or emergency, the current institution or System response, and to consult on the communication strategy as appropriate.

III. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Institution Presidents are expected to communicate to the Chancellor that an institution level crisis management process has been established and is understood, and reviewed with the Chancellor, as a part of the presidential performance review process, any negative events and emergencies at the institution level that fall within the definition of crisis above that occurred in the prior calendar year.