

***When Bad Things Happen:
Crisis Communication for
College Leadership***

**Inland Empire Desert
Regional Consortium
April 2018**

Don't Let This Be You...



Newsroom Employees

54,200

2003

36,700

2013

News Consumption

215,000

SF Chronicle daily circulation

1.9 billion

Facebook users

66%

Those who consume news on Facebook

The Power of Local Television...

2 million

Nightly LA viewers of top 10 stations

400,000

6pm Telemundo and Univision viewers

...and the Power of Social Media



Randa Jarrar ✓

@randajarrar

Follow



Barbara Bush was a generous and smart and amazing racist who, along with her husband, raised a war criminal. ~~Post~~ outta here with your nice words.

5:27 PM - 17 Apr 2018

153 Retweets 457 Likes



2.3K

153

457



Rapid Response is Key

April 17, 2018

STATEMENT BY JOSEPH I. CASTRO, FRESNO STATE
PRESIDENT

On behalf of Fresno State, I extend my deepest condolences to the Bush family on the loss of our former First Lady, Barbara Bush.

We share the deep concerns expressed by others over the personal comments made today by Professor Randa Jarrar, a professor in the English Department at Fresno State. Her statements were made as a private citizen, not as a representative of Fresno State.

Professor Jarrar's expressed personal views and commentary are obviously contrary to the core values of our University, which include respect and empathy for individuals with divergent points of view, and a sincere commitment to mutual understanding and progress.

2016 Sherpa Fire: How We're Getting News

- County website traffic tripled immediately
 - 46% from web search
 - 27% from links on other websites
 - 21% from typing directly
 - 5% from social media
- Website traffic was 60% mobile, 40% desktop
- Social media: 69% Facebook, 28% Twitter
- 90% of traffic from inside California, 50% from inside County

Today's Media Environment

- Crises of confidence most frequent challenge
 - I-Teams attract eyeballs; not immediately apparent; as serious as a natural disaster
- You live in a fishbowl
 - Everyone's a member of the media but not a journalist; assume all documents public; push back on legal
- Deadlines are gone
 - Need 24/7 access; use Google Voice; be familiar with editors

Today's Media Environment

- Attention spans are dwindling
 - Think visually; create shorter documents and videos; recognize multitasking
- Weeklies and bloggers matter
 - Pitch stories in right format; take info/interview requests seriously
- "Off the Record" can be dangerous
 - Long-term relationships rare today; rules have changed; not worth the risk

Today's Media Environment

- Accurate vs. immediate
 - Often digging out of a hole; one wrong post can cause havoc; need social media policy
- Experienced reporters are disappearing
 - Build relationships with new reporters; foster message culture; become credible source on college issues
- Your story isn't just local
 - Recognize cross-ownership and aggregation; anticipate broad reaction; monitor other stories

Today's Media Environment

- News is consumed on the run
 - Every word counts; reporters required to tweet; public opinion is formed immediately without much thought
- Government gets noticed – colleges too
 - All levels are generating new levels of discussion
- Crisis communications costs are dropping
 - Most audiences can be reached with tweets, posts, and email blasts; many are no/low cost

MiraCosta College

PRA Request

- All emails over an extended period containing these words/phrases:
 - For crying out loud, Holy sh*t, Holy cow, Holy crap, Oh my God, Oh my goodness, OMG, OMFG, Oops, Shoot, Yikes, !!!, What a disaster, Hit the fan, Perception issue, Screw up, Screwed up, Uncomfortable, Big trouble
- Limited to Deans, Vice Presidents, and Superintendent, but still a huge volume

Golden West College

Long Beach Press Telegram 3/5/18

Officials at Golden West College said Monday, March 5, that they are looking into whether comments a professor made on a video posted online, in which she appeared to tell a Long Beach couple to “go back to your home country,” violated the school’s policies. If they do, the professor’s remarks could result in some type of punishment, said Letitia Clark, a spokeswoman for the Coast Community College District, which operates Golden West.

Orange Coast College

Orange County Register 2/15/17


An Orange Coast College student who secretly videotaped his instructor making anti-Trump statements was suspended from school and told to write a letter of apology as well as a three-page essay about the incident.

The college suspended Caleb O'Neil for the current semester and the summer term, saying he violated a Coast Community College District policy prohibiting recording someone on district property without that person's consent.

Public Business on Personal Devices


- PRA gives every person the power to inspect public records
- Recent CA Supreme Court decision holds that communications by a city (meaning public) employee concerning public business on a personal account such as email, phone, or computer, may be subject to PRA disclosure

More Visuals, Fewer Words


 **Texas Department of Insurance**
Insurance | Workers' Compensation | State Fire Marshal

Help after Harvey: TDI news, resources
Texas Department of Insurance sent this bulletin at 08/25/2017 12:44 PM CDT


Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

 **Texas Department of Insurance**


After a storm...



Call your insurance agent



Protect your home from more damage



Make a list of damage & take pictures

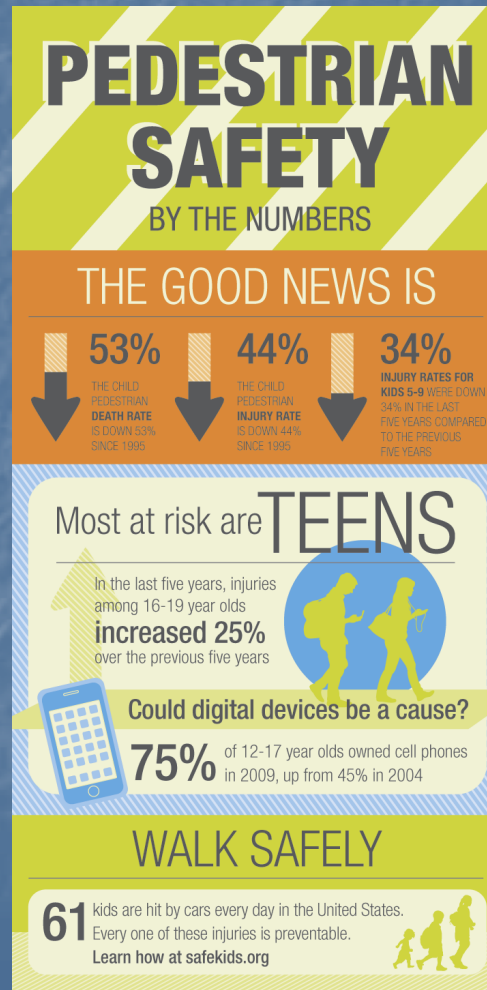
To get the latest information:

- [Help after Harvey web page](#)
- [Office closures web page](#)
- [TDI Facebook](#)
- [TDI Twitter](#)

To get news alerts on your phone:

1. Go to our [sign up page](#).
2. Next to "Subscription Type," select "SMS/Text Message."
3. Follow steps and subscribe to "News."

More Visuals, Fewer Words



Honest Communication



@shakatron BART was built to transport far fewer people, and much of our system has reached the end of its useful life. This is our reality.

RETWEETS

992

LIKES

1,354



Strategy Often Missing



Merced

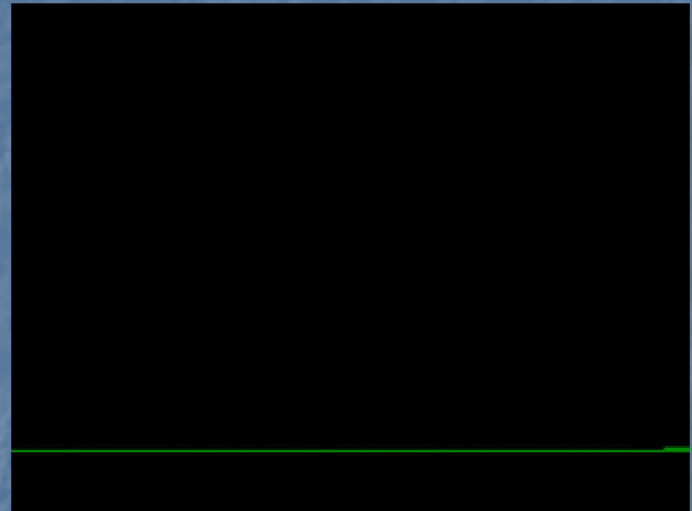


Ball State

Good Recent Examples



Oroville Dam



SBCC

How to Make Things Worse

- Lie
- Speculate
- Pretend things are OK when they are obviously not OK
- Stall
- Stonewall
- Argue with reporters
- Avoid the public
- Set unrealistic expectations
- Play it by ear
- Find someone else to blame
- And this one...



Berkeley Chief

Before a Crisis

- Get to know reporters and editors and how to reach them around the clock
- Designate and train spokespeople
- Identify your team members



Prescott Fire

Must Have a Plan

- Good crisis response is based on a communication plan already in place
- No college can create an effective crisis communication plan after a crisis starts
- Plan can't be off-the-shelf
- Public now demands reliable communication via multiple channels

Get Ahead of the Story

- Notify traditional media ASAP so you can define your own story – if you don't, they'll get their information from somebody else
- Engage early and consistently on all your social media platforms
- Inform your internal audiences – students, faculty, staff, partner organizations, elected officials – so they get it straight from you

Five Essential Questions

- What's going on?
 - Who? What? When? Where? **How? Why?**
- How long has it been going on?
- How long have you known about it?
- What have you done so far?
- What are you doing to make sure this never happens again?

Interview Rights & Responsibilities

- **Know your audiences**

- Who's reading/hearing your comments?
- What do they know already?
- Have accurate perceptions of your college?
- Can you correct perceptions?
- How will they respond?

Interview Rights & Responsibilities

■ Before the interview

- Consult staff members who have good instincts
- Determine the spokesperson
- Evaluate the publication/outlet
- Read/view related stories
- Ask what prompted story, who else is being interviewed
- Don't ask for specific questions
- Train

Interview Rights & Responsibilities

■ The interview setting

- Too hot/cold or sun in your eyes - move it
- Setting should bolster the story
- Appropriate attire
- Watch air monitor if live shot
- Use landline if phone interview
- Avoid distractions



BBC interruption

You Can Navigate Even the Toughest Crisis



Follow-up

- Pay close attention to how colleges and universities handle crises
 - Aware of the media's needs?
 - Prepared with their response?
 - Using a wide range of tools?
 - Engaging in social media?
 - Showing empathy?
- Email, call, or text
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