



## WACAC Rapid Response Plan

### September 2020

WACAC's Rapid Response Plan reflects responses to situations requiring association attention, response, and/or action. Our Rapid Response Team includes members of the Executive Committee and any regional response coordinators.

For each situation, the **Rapid Response Team** takes into consideration:

- **Objectives:** what is the overall goal?
- **Audiences:** members, nonmembers, students, other stakeholders?
- **Messages:** what are we trying to convey?
- **Timetable:** timeline and deadlines?
- **Budget, Skills:** do we have the fiscal and member resources to respond effectively?
- **Executive Board Support:** is board sign-off needed?

### Organizational Processes

Over the course of understanding how an issue unfolds, WACAC will take the following steps:

- Convene a meeting of the **Executive Committee** when issues needing a response arise. Permanent members of the Committee include the President, President-Elect, Past-President, Treasurer, Executive Assistant and Chairs of the College Fairs, Communications, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA), and Professional Development Committees. Other WACAC members may be added as needed.
- Discuss the complexities and sensitivities of the issue. Questions to consider:
  - Why does this matter to WACAC?
  - What is the connection to WACAC's mission and values?
  - What can WACAC do about it?
  - Of all possible responses we could have, what's the best one?
  - Advantages and disadvantages of responding

*WACAC uses NACAC's Spotlight System to clarify what constitutes a crisis (See Appendix A).*

- Consult with **regional response coordinators** on potential local response activities. WACAC maintains regional response coordinators in Northern California, Southern California, Northern Nevada, and Southern Nevada. (See Appendix B)
- If WACAC decides to speak or act on the issue, the Presidential Trio, Executive Assistant, and Communications Chair will determine a message and dissemination strategy.

## WACAC Media Platforms

News from WACAC can be pushed to members and the public on the following platforms after review by the Rapid Response Team:

- WACAC website (wacac.org)
- WACACConnection eblasts
- WACAC Blog
- WACAC Social Media: Twitter, Facebook
- Counseling Facebook Groups: ACCEPT, College Admission Counselors
- NACAC Exchange, *Bulletin*

## Possible WACAC Responses

**In the event of a natural or man-made disaster that causes temporary or long-term disruption in communities, schools, colleges, and the lives of students, WACAC could:**

- Provide updates and resources on its website for members and the public pertaining to the catastrophic event.
- Designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of WACAC; develop talking points to be conveyed during any media queries.
- Issue a statement urging flexibility for and fair treatment of students who have been displaced or affected by the event. The statement could cover such issues as deadlines, financial aid, student transfer status, mid-year admission, and/or student enrollment.
- Encourage support from other education organizations that assist students and families (i.e., ACT, California Association of School Counselors, College Board, Common Application, National College Access Network etc.)
- Coordinate WACAC volunteers to assist students needing help with applications, scholarships, communicating with colleges, etc.
- Consult with the Past-President Council on using the Berman-Chalmers Fund for relief activities; work with Development Chair on launching communication around fundraising.

## Best Practices For Member Institutions

**History suggests some best practices for postsecondary institutions in the event of a disruptive natural or man-made disaster. WACAC could encourage colleges to:**

- Be flexible with admission application deadlines for students in the affected areas.
- Communicate with local feeder schools to provide a contact number of an individual on staff who can manage calls about the catastrophe.
- Post guidance on gateway pages of admission and financial aid websites about how the institution will accommodate students affected by catastrophic events. New policies and procedures should be front-and-center; necessary forms should be easy to access.
- Provide guidance on how students can complete or make changes to FAFSA (or other pertinent paperwork) to let colleges know they have been affected by the events.

## Appendix A



### Responding to Crises

What constitutes a crisis? Opinions may vary, even among members of the same affiliate. Use the Stoplight System to help your team identify and respond to crises.

## GREEN

Not an immediate concern  
but one that deserves monitoring.  
It's all about preparation.

- Small group of people affected
- Not covered by local/regional media
- Does not affect brand/reputation
- One-or-two negative social media posts
- No impact on ability to perform
- Dismissed by public

# YELLOW

Not good news but not a crisis, yet.  
Could escalate if not managed well.

- Negative impact to business/brand
- Discomfort to those directly involved
- Impacts local communities/members/components
- Limited impact on ability to perform
- Executives/management involved
- State or local investigation/arrest
- National/local media coverage
- Industry specific implications
- Limited social media posts
- Can be explained

# RED

Five alarm crisis!  
Stop everything and create  
a plan to manage NOW.

- Will cause harm (physically/financially)
- Catastrophic event (hurricane, bankruptcy, etc.)
- Widespread implications
- High-profile people involved
- National/local media coverage
- History making
- Creates new law, policies, procedures etc.
- Becomes viral, many negative social media posts
- Devastating impact to brand/reputation
- Loss of business, contracts, stops production
- Federal investigation/arrests
- Public "shock" or "disgust"

## Appendix B



Phil Moreno, President  
Lauren Cook, Past-President  
Breanne Boyle President-Elect  
Dewey Wilmot, Treasurer

Deanna Smith Kilgour, Executive Assistant  
Herbie Walker, College Fairs Chair  
David Mills, Communications Chair  
Nikki Chun, IDEA Chair  
Marie Bury, Professional Development Chair

Katy Murphy, Northern California Coordinator  
Gary Clark, Southern California Coordinator  
Kati Swanson, Northern Nevada Coordinator  
Chad Gregorius, Southern Nevada Coordinator