

# **Crisis Management Plan**

## **International Student and Scholar Services**

### **University of Colorado Colorado Springs**

#### **I. Purpose and Context:**

In the event of any situation that poses a threat of damage to life or health, or serious disruption to a student or group of international students at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, this document provides a contingent crisis management plan to guide International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) action and communication. This plan consists of a list of ISSS staff responsible for taking the lead in a crisis, other offices or organizations on campus and in Colorado Springs that may need to contribute assistance, and a communication protocol/guideline to be implemented.

Crises vary widely but can generally be defined as:

‘Incidents that directly affect a single student or group of students, in a negative and severe way.’

Examples of crises that may need ISSS intervention and assistance are financial, medical, cultural, academic, or criminal/legal situations. Crises can be spontaneous, immediate, and require extraordinary staff efforts outside the normal work schedule, or they can be more long-term, such as a financial crisis related to events at home, in which most crisis management work can probably be handled during the normal workday.

The main purpose of this crisis management plan is to guide ISSS staff in assisting our international students in an organized and timely manner, with best practices of our profession in mind, in a humane, consistent and thoughtful way. Due to the wide variety of possible crises to be covered by this document, this template is to be considered a general procedure to follow. Every situation is different; however, following the outline of this plan should assist ISSS to manage an event as best as possible, minimizing negative outcomes to the highest degree possible.

## II. General Guidelines & Tips for Crisis Management

When a crisis is anticipated or occurs, the following steps will be taken:

1. For any potentially life-threatening situations, or any crisis occurring after hours, contact UCCS Public Safety.
2. Any member of ISSS who becomes aware of a crisis unfolding should call a meeting with appropriate staff members.
3. The Program Director of ISSS will notify the Assistant Vice Chancellor Student Support and Engagement of the incident. The Assistant Vice Chancellor will inform the Chancellor and other executive officers as appropriate.
4. At the meeting:
  - a. Share all available information with the team.
  - b. Identify all affected parties and assign specific people to follow-up with each of those parties; where the incident involves alleged "victims," assure that all services possible are made available to the victims while protecting their privacy. Where the incident involves alleged "perpetrators/violators," assure that the Office of Institutional Equity provides appropriate follow-up with student violators. Establish contacts for parents and families as appropriate.
  - c. If necessary, establish the "University position and statement" and who will make the initial statement. Agree on the information to be conveyed to the campus and/or public by any other members of the team.
  - d. Agree upon the steps to be taken to manage the specific crisis.
5. Inform the campus and the public of the University position through the designated spokesperson.
6. Inform all University personnel necessary of the incident and the specific crisis management plan; involve others as appropriate in managing the crisis to the best of their ability.
7. Communicate again after the crisis unfolds to facilitate crisis debriefing sessions for the University community, review the specific crisis management plan, evaluate the responses to the crisis from various departments and agencies and make recommendations for improvements.
8. A member of ISSS should make a brief written report for each incident to be placed on file. The report may include the facts of the incident, an analysis of the situation, any recommendations resulting from the incident and other pertinent information.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Timely, clear, and dependable communication is key in any crisis to assist in effective resolution
- Document everything, in a secure and confidential manner. Clear records are important and may be needed for legal reasons
- Be extremely careful in asking for assistance with any sensitive situation from outside ISSS and UCCS network, as gossip spreads quickly
- Be proactive in developing and maintaining positive relationships with students, family members, sponsors, and key resource people

- Be aware of the possible interconnectedness of issues and crises – for example, a family situation back home can turn into a financial crisis for a student, and then in turn become a mental health and academic crisis

### III. Critical Scenarios

ISSS has many important and time-critical functions; however, none is more important than assisting in a crisis. All ISSS staff are considered to be ‘on-call’ for events such as these. Though these events are rare, when they do occur it is important to have staff-hours available to deal with them outside of the typical workday, while not allowing the other ISSS functions to fall off the radar. It is also important that all ISSS staff are aware of the events and their effect on staffing, even if not directly involved.

#### Critical Scenarios (examples):

**1. Home country events such as natural disasters affecting a group of students:** It is important to stay informed about world events and know your students may be affected and make sure that ISSS is an advocate for students in such cases. In these kinds of crises, colleagues at other institutions can be a great resource to stay informed. NAFSA is also a good resource for events affecting countries or regions, and how to assist students.

- Identify affected students and reach out to them as quickly as possible to make them aware that ISSS is ready to assist
- Provide embassy and consulate contact information to the affected students
- Forward relevant updates to students, such as provisions for financial and immigration assistance
- Pay attention to possible assistance that may be available through the IIE Emergency Fund, U.S. government, for example Temporary Protected Status, work permission, etc.
- Other things to consider:
  - Be aware that students may not be forthcoming with information if they perceive it could endanger their status in any way, or for cultural reasons
  - Make sure that students know Mental Health Services is available to assist individually, and arrange group counseling session(s) as well

#### 2. Death of a student

- Contact the Office of the Dean of Students’ CARE Team immediately
- Is the student exchange? Sponsored? Through an agreement? If so, contact that partner/sponsor as quickly as possible
- Contact the student’s insurance company (if known) to begin the process of repatriation of remains
- If the student’s emergency contact has not been notified, consider the correct channels and appropriate personnel and legal guidelines to get in contact with them immediately

- If necessary, refer the family to an immigration attorney (resource AILA.org)
- Once death certificate is available, update the student's SEVIS record with termination reason of "Death."
- Other things to consider:
  - Ensure that students know Mental Health Services at the Wellness Center is available to assist individually, and arrange group counseling session(s) for friends/classmates
  - Family will probably need assistance if/when they come to campus, stay in contact with them and stand by to offer assistance
  - Help the family settle any outstanding affairs of the student, such as student accounts, housing, refunds, etc.
  - Be aware of cultural stigmas and practices regarding death and bereavement, for example in the case of a student suicide it will be very helpful to have a 'culture expert' from the country/culture assist in knowing how best to help

### **3. Serious injury/accident/medical emergency involving a student or group of students**

- Contact the Office of the Dean of Students' CARE Team immediately
- Assist with any issues or questions with the insurance provider
- Assist with legal procedures – locating attorney, assisting with inquiries, etc.
- Assist any dependents with practical issues, stand by ready to support
- In compliance with HIPAA and FERPA guidelines, and coordinating with the student, if possible (and not distressing), consider notifying the student's family or emergency contact as soon as possible
- Advise the student about the immigration implications of the situation (it may be possible to miss class for an extended time through an RCL for medical or mental health)
- Other things to consider:
  - Ensure that students know Mental Health Services is available to assist individually, and arrange group counseling session(s) for friends and classmates
  - Students may need assistance navigating the U.S. Healthcare system, be ready to offer support and resources
  - Advise student about applying for a reduced course load for medical reasons, as appropriate

### **4. Medical emergency involving a dependent of a student**

- Assist with any issues or questions from the insurance provider
- Offer support and empathy in person, by email, etc., and be ready to answer any questions
- Advise the student how to manage the situation if needing assisting with U.S. health care
- Advise the student about the immigration implications of the situation (it may be possible to miss class for an extended time through an RCL for medical or mental health)

- Strongly encourage them to attend counseling as appropriate, since that will help make an RCL possible if necessary
- Advise and assist the student in contacting the Office of the Dean of Students' CARE Team if they will miss class for an extended period of time

**5. Mental health crisis involving a student:** this can be a common concern and non-severe mental health issues such as culture shock and homesickness are likely experienced by most international students. ISSS needs to be alerted to concerns raised by friends, classmates, and UCCS faculty and staff of more severe cases and refer for assistance to professionals in all cases.

- If a student is in a severe mental health crisis and at risk of harming themselves, contact Public Safety immediately
- Refer common mental health issues first to Mental Health Services in the Wellness Center, in person if possible, by walking the student over to the appropriate office (have a female advisor assist female, and male advisor assist male, if possible)
- In accordance with FERPA and HIPAA requirements, notify the student's family or emergency contact
- In case of concern, request a 'Wellness Check' from UCCS Residence Life or UCCS Police
- If student lives off campus, a family member can request a check from law enforcement in case of serious concern for a student's welfare
- Assist mental health providers with questions about student's situation, immigration status, etc.
- Advise and help the student to contact the Office of the Dean of Students' CARE Team
- Other things to consider:
  - If possible, help to de-stigmatize mental health issues and treatment for the student through direct advising
  - Be ready to advise the student on how they will need to apply for a reduced course load if absent from classes for an extended period of time for mental health issues
  - It may be that the issue is unresolvable, and that the student will need to return home and give up their academic program. If so, take the necessary immigration actions in SEVIS.

**6. Missing student:** this scenario can be very challenging due to U.S. privacy laws as well as the probable ambiguity but is often associated with a student's mental health issues, or due to cultural differences in the understanding of a student to be 'present' and attending classes.

- Preventive planning is helpful – collect emergency contact info and cover this issue at orientation, explain importance of U.S. class attendance
- Collect information on notification of missing student – name, address, email, phone number, when and where last seen, and by whom
- Other helpful information about the last interaction the student had with others – did they express any travel plans? Did they seem prepared for travel? Did they seem to be distressed?

- Attempt to contact the missing student using existing information and communication channels
- Contact UCCS Residence Life, if student lives on campus, request a wellness check
- Contact UCCS Public Safety if the student lives off campus
- Notify the Office of the Dean of Students' CARE Team if the student cannot be located
- If the student is not located within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 hours), make further notification and inquiries:
  - Notify the appropriate embassy or consulate in the United States
  - Continue to work with university and local police
  - Support any family members that arrive to the United States
  - Decide what action must be taken in SEVIS
- When the missing person is located:
  - Verify he or she is safe and healthy
  - Meet with the student to resolve any unanswered questions or concerns and refer to community resources if necessary
  - Close the loop with all relevant parties and update SEVIS if necessary

**7. Nationwide Crisis:** this is any situation that poses a severe, urgent threat to the United States' stability, safety, or well-being. It can involve health, economic, political, environmental, or social emergencies.

- Offer immediate assistance to students with any concerns – medical assistance, counseling, communicating with family/friends, etc.
- Send timely updates explaining how the crisis may impact international students and correct any potential misinformation
- If needed, connect students with emergency funding, food assistance, health services, etc.
- Maintain regular contact with the student to let them know ISSS is there and ready to assist with any needs
- Other things to consider:
  - If operations at the University will change, such as moving to 100% remote learning for a period of time, email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov) and copy the Colorado DHS field representative to notify them about the change of operational plan for international students
  - Advise students about the immigration implications of the situation (it may be possible to miss class for an extended time through an RCL for medical or mental health)

**8. Student a victim of a crime:** this can range from a property theft of an item valued at a few dollars, to loss of life. This type of crisis can have major implications for the institution, as if it is publicized the institution may become notorious in the student's country as being 'dangerous.'

- Offer immediate assistance to the student with any concern – medical assistance, counseling, communicating with family/friends, assisting with application for replacement documents, etc.

- Assist with referral to appropriate legal representation if a simple property crime or disagreement about a lease, for example, or other legal questions
- Help student communicate with other UCCS offices for assistance as needed – UCCS Public Safety, Office of the Dean of Students' CARE Team, etc.
- Maintain regular contact with the student to let them know ISSS is there and ready to assist with any needs
- Other things to consider:
  - Be aware there may be very different cultural concerns at play, for example if the student is a victim of any kind of abuse or sexual assault
  - Advise the student about the immigration implications of the situation (it may be possible to miss class for an extended time through an RCL for medical or mental health)
  - There may be immigration benefits to the case for the victim, refer the student to an immigration attorney (resource AILA.org)

#### **9. Student arrested for a crime**

- Act as advocate and advisor for the student but not legal representation
- Advise student on immigration implications of the situation (loss of status due to inability to continue studies, possible revocation of visa, records available to U.S. government agencies, etc.)
- Assist student and refer to legal assistance for help understanding U.S. legal system
- Is the crime serious and a possible national security or trafficking concern? Using discretion, notify Homeland Security Investigations if they are not already aware
- Other things to consider:
  - Be aware of possible consequences for the student back in their home country
  - Immediate SEVIS action is not required for F-1 students or J-1 students but note that an obligation may arise

## **IV. Communication Response Protocol & Contacts**

III-A ISSS Officials – in general order of contact:

| <b>Name</b>                       | <b>Phone Number</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Tina Ewald, Program Director   | 719-255-4908        |
| 2. Karlye Enkler, Program Manager | 719-255-5019        |
| 3. UCCS 24-hour Police Dept.      | 719-255-3111        |

### III-B Stakeholders for direct communication from ISSS, as appropriate:

It is essential to have a good ongoing relationship with the following units and individuals, and to know who, in each office or role, will be responsive and helpful in the event of a crisis. Regular meetings and social networking can be useful in building and maintaining these supportive positive relationships. The ISSS Program Director should take the lead in communication and decisions about communication. All communication should be documented.

- Office of the Dean of Students  
General Office: 719-255-3091  
  
Alex Baker, Dean of Students: 719-255-6539  
Dr. Amanda Allee, Assistant Vice Chancellor Student Support and Engagement: 719-255-3834
- UCCS Police Department  
Emergency: 719-255-3111
- Colorado Springs Police Department  
Emergency: 9-1-1  
Non-Emergency: 719-444-7000
- UCCS Student Wellness Center  
General: 719-255-4444  
Choice Enrollment - Colorado Springs Health Insurance Sign Up Center 719-481-1616
- Other local physician or medical professional (liaised through UCCS Wellness Center)
- UCCS Mental Health Services  
Benek Altayli, Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health and Wellness: 719-255-3257  
  
Cathy Calvert, Director of Mental Health Services: 719-255-3660
- UCCS Legal Counsel's office  
Main: 719-255-3820
- UCCS Media Relations (Spokesperson)  
Jenna Press, Director of Media Relations: 719-255-3732
- MOSAIC – Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness, and Community  
Whitley Hadley, Director: 719-255-3040  
Rafael Norwood, Senior Program Director: 719-255-3447  
General: 719-255-3319
- UCCS Residence Life

General: 719-255-6288 or 719-255-4042

John J. Lauer, Senior Director of Residence Life and Housing: 719-255-4327

- UCCS Graduate School:  
General: 719-255-3072 or 719-255-3417  
Dr. Hillary Fouts, Dean: 719-255-3779
- UCCS Office of Student Life  
General: 719-255-3470
- Academic faculty and/or department
- Family members in or out of the U.S.
- Friends and classmates at UCCS
- Sponsoring Agencies & Program Managers
  - a. **Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission:**  
Main: 202-342-3800  
Emergency: 202-746-0666
  - b. **Kuwait Cultural Office Los Angeles:**  
Main: 310-746-4789  
Emergency Outside of Office Hours: +1(310) 279-3644
  - c. **Kuwait Defense Attaché Office:**  
Main: 202-364-2200
  - d. **United Arab Emirates Cultural Division:**  
Main: 202-243-4444  
Emergency: 240-654-2720
- U.S. Dept of State (for J-1 students and scholars)  
Emergency Hotline: 1-866-283-9090  
Report Incidents to: [AGalert@state.gov](mailto:AGalert@state.gov)
- Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)  
Contact Number: 1-800-892-4829  
Report change in operational plans to: [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov)
- Customs and Border Protection  
Customer Service: 1-877-227-5511
- Homeland Security Investigations  
Colorado Principal Field Office: 303-721-3000

### III-C Media Guidelines

No ISSS staff member should communicate with any media about any crisis involving any international student or group of students. The reply to any such requests should be 'No Comment.' Official guidance on information to be shared and media requests for access should be forwarded directly to the Director of University Communications and Media Relations after thoroughly advising that stakeholder. Early on, a touch base meeting, formal or informal, should occur to make sure of a consistent message, language, and protocol for dealing with media requests.

### III-D Communication Protocol

The above-named stakeholders and any others that may be relevant to a situation should be informed of the details of a situation in a timely manner, being careful to follow FERPA and HIPAA guidelines. UCCS units can be communicated with directly, as they are also bound by FERPA and HIPAA.

As a general guideline, the Program Director of ISSS should take the lead in managing a crisis involving a UCCS international student or group of students, and in making ongoing decisions about with whom and when to communicate.

ISSS must respond immediately to requests for information and updates from the Vice Chancellor and rely on the Vice Chancellor to keep the Chancellor informed.

Phone is the preferred method of communication in any crisis, for timeliness of communication and for better management of possible confidentiality concerns.

## V – Translation Assistance

A major role that ISSS can play in crises (and not only involving the international student population) is help in locating translation assistance. There are some faculty and staff members at UCCS who have proficient to fluent foreign language skills or have contacts who speak other languages and can be called upon in times of emergencies to offer help. There are also external resources available for translation services as well.

#### On-Campus:

- Dr. Jesse Perez, Languages Excel Center Director: 719-255-3691
- Fernando Feliu-Moggi: Spanish and Italian (fluent)  
#719-255-3537
- Disability Services: contacts for American Sign Language (for students registered through Disability Services)

#719-255-3354

- Ida Wilding, Professor of American Sign Language: 719-309-4916

Off-Campus:

GlobeLink Foreign Language Center:

#719-532-0300

<https://globelinkflc.com/>

Charged by the hour; rate dependent on language that is being interpreted

## **VI – ISSS and Crisis Management**

The ISSS front desk is staffed by student workers. These front-line service workers do not have crisis management in their job description. However, a basic understanding of the organizational structure, and the discretion to know who to contact in the event of any emergency, or perceived emergency or crisis, is important since these are the people answering the phone for ISSS. It is important that these workers are trained well, and understand the imperativeness of following FERPA and HIPPA, without exception, no matter how sensational an event may be.

ISSS staff should be advised if there is a crisis ongoing, or if communication is expected regarding a certain case, and to know what to do. For example, if we are expecting a call from the U.S. government or a foreign government official, from a health insurance representative, from a family member, etc., they should be advised of what to do with the incoming call.

## **VII – Assisting Family Members from Abroad**

ISSS has an important role to fulfill in assisting any family members who may travel to the U.S. to assist students affected in a crisis. It falls to ISSS in many cases to provide language assistance, helping with accommodation, food (including shopping and cooking, in some cases), providing a temporary cell phone, and any other aspect of their needs here that we can help with in relation to the crisis. ISSS may also need to be present and help arrange meetings the family members may need, for example with doctors, UCCS student wellness center staff, law enforcement personnel, etc. It is important to note the ISSS role – assistance of first resort as needed, and as advocate for the student to the degree possible.

## **VIII – Medical Evacuations and Repatriations**

Any student in a medical emergency who undergoes medical evacuation to elsewhere in the U.S. or to their home country is a candidate for using the medical evacuation provision in their own policy.

An ISSS staff member (ideally one who has been involved in the case from the start and is well-informed) should assist the student in contacting their insurance company as soon as it is thought that

their assistance may be necessary. The company will likely open a case file and communicate directly with the medical facility and professionals involved in researching the case. Information that may be needed includes the student's name, date of birth, insurance card number, and a basic description of the medical circumstances.

## **IX. Emergency Financial Assistance:**

ISSS does not currently have a dedicated emergency financial fund to assist international students in crisis situations, however the discretionary funds that the program has can be used to assist in some cases. ISSS may need to formalize a request on behalf of the affected student(s) to assist in an emergency or crisis as needed.

## **X. Helpful Resources:**

The following supplemental resources may be useful in relation to crisis management:

[CU University Risk Management Office](#)

[NAFSA: Before, During and After a Crisis: Questions to Ask](#)

[NAFSA: Crisis Management in a Cross-Cultural Setting: International Student and Scholar Services Checklists](#)

## International Student and Scholar Incident Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Submitting Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Student or Scholar's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Were other UCCS students or scholars involved? Yes No

Were there witnesses? Yes No

If there were UCCS witnesses, please provide full first and last name:

Brief description of Incident:

**Recommendations for future incidents that are similar in nature:**