

Winthrop University Foundation Media Policy for a Crisis Situation

A crisis is defined as any emergency or controversy that could negatively affect the public perception or reputation of the University or the Foundation. Crisis communications have a lasting impact on institutional reputation and public support. How well we convey our message to the public greatly depends on what is reported to the news media. This is especially true in a crisis, during which the news media is the primary means of communication to our constituencies. Because of the emotions that usually accompany crises, images formed from crisis reporting are especially important in shaping long-lasting public impressions of the institution.

In the event of a crisis:

1. The President of the Foundation Board and the Executive Director of the Foundation are responsible for all media relations for the Winthrop University Foundation. This includes disseminating all press releases and handling all press inquiries. The Executive Director is the official Foundation spokesperson during a crisis situation. Employees contacted by any media representation should direct these calls and inquiries in a timely fashion to the Executive Director. As a courtesy, they should notify the Executive Director whenever a media representative has contacted them.
2. "No comment" is never an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, make note of the question and explain that the inquiry will be directed to the Executive Director for a response to the inquiry. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.
3. Personnel matters are to remain confidential.
4. When possible, responses should be proactive, responsive, and action-oriented.