



## **MANAGING REAL AND PERCEIVED EMERGENCIES ABROAD**

### **International Programs Office University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

**Daytime office hours: 715-346-2717 (M-F except holidays, 7:45 am – 4:30 PM Central Time)**  
**Emergency Phone: [Protective Services Office] 715-346-3456 (after hours and weekends)**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines are written to outline the steps that International Programs (IP) staff in Stevens Point and abroad will follow in the event of a study abroad emergency. The guidelines outline what Stevens Point expects overseas staff to do in the event of an emergency, including the provision of information and handling of the situation on-site. In addition, these guidelines describe how a real crisis overseas is managed through the use of the UWSP Crisis Management Team.

International Programs (IP), a unit of the Office of Academic Affairs, is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the management of emergencies affecting participants in study abroad programs that IP offers for credit. The safety and well being of students, faculty, and staff are of the highest importance, and all reasonable actions are and will be taken to accomplish this. Current information about risk factors is essential so that individual participants can make informed decisions regarding program participation. On-site staff need to be ready to act in an emergency and to be in regular communication with IP to develop the most effective course of action in emergency situations. At program sites where there are not staff specifically hired to manage the program, the local institutional contact can act as a resource.

UW System has established Policy Guidelines (ACIS 7.1-2) for the development and operation of educational programs abroad. The plan for managing emergencies outlined in this document follows the ACIS Policy guidelines. While acknowledging that no single plan can address all contingencies, International Programs recognizes the importance of establishing, in advance, policies and procedures that are designed to safeguard the safety and well-being of study abroad participants and to clarify the University's legal liability. The policies and procedures described below will serve to guide the University's response to crises affecting participants abroad.

### **Real and Perceived Emergencies**

In "Coping with Perceived Emergencies" (1989), Diane Smell draws a distinction between "real" and "perceived" emergencies. Real emergencies are those that pose a genuine and sometimes immediate risk to, or that have already disturbed, the safety and well being of participants. These include such occurrences as *coups* and other civil disturbances; natural and human-made disasters; incarcerations; serious physical or emotional illness; accidents; physical assaults; disappearances or kidnapping; and terrorist threats and attacks.

**Perceived emergencies** are those which pose no significant risks to the safety and well-being of participants, but which are seen as threatening by family members in the U.S. or by others, including, at times, students and colleagues at the home university. Perceptions of threat can arise from a variety of sources, including sensationalized media reports of an event abroad; the distortion of information provided by a participant in a telephone call, e-mail message, fax or letter home; or simply out of the nervousness of a family member or student with little or no international experience. Such perceptions will sometimes affect family members and others in the U.S. more strongly than will real emergencies, and need to be treated seriously.

By closely following the procedures outlined below, the staff of International Programs will be able to gather information that will allow them to respond appropriately to real emergencies, or to place a perceived emergency in its proper context, and thereby reassure family members and others in the U.S. Other UWSP units that manage overseas programs are encouraged to follow these same procedures and to consult with the UWSP Crisis Management Team as appropriate.

After working hours, on weekends and holidays, an IP staff member will be on call. Staff telephone numbers can be found in each student handbook and are provided to all overseas offices. To be prepared to answer calls, all staff who handle emergency phone calls will have updated copies of the following publications at home in the event of an after hours emergency: 1) a staff directory; 2) an overseas contact list; 3) a domestic contact list; 4) these procedures.

### **Operating Principles**

In managing emergencies, the following operating principles will guide the International Programs Office in its decision-making :

1. All responses to a crisis will be governed by the highest concern for the safety and well being of students, faculty and staff participating in UWSP-sponsored study abroad programs.
2. All reasonable and prudent measures will be taken to limit the University's legal liabilities.
3. International Programs will exercise caution and restraint in deciding when, and with whom, information about an emergency should be shared, and will operate according to the procedures outlined below in deciding how information should be shared.
4. International Programs will respond to emergencies by closely following the procedures outlined below, except when otherwise directed by circumstances or agencies outside the University's control.

### **Procedures**

When an emergency is reported, the International Programs Office will follow the appropriate procedures in the order that they appear in this text.

**I: An Emergency is Reported to the International Programs Office**

A. Whoever learns of an emergency involving a UWSP student, faculty or staff member on an IP sponsored study abroad program must immediately contact the Director of International Programs either at the office or at home. Every effort should be made to reach the Director or her/his representative by telephone, rather than by e-mail or fax. The Director will work with the UWSP Crisis Management Team to coordinate the University's response to the crisis until it has passed.

B. If the Director is not available, the Associate Director of International Programs should be contacted; the Associate Director will then coordinate the University's response to the crisis in the Director's absence.

C. She/he will also brief the Director by phone or, if not possible, by fax, about the evolution of the crisis, until such time as the Director returns to campus.

D. Contact numbers for these individuals are:

Director of IP:	<b>Eric Yonke</b> office: (715) 346-3693/2717 home: (715) 344-2832 cell: (715) 630-8839
Associate Director	<b>Mark Koepke</b> office: (715) 346-3757/2717 home: (715) 345-0570 cell: (715) 252-1415
Office Manager:	<b>Linda Garski</b> office: (715) 346-2382/2717 home: (715) 592-4430

E. If none of these individuals can be contacted, Protective Services should be called at (715) 346-3456.

F. **Incident Report Form:** For programs with a faculty or staff leader, it is the leader's responsibility to fill out the incident report form provided by IP. A copy of the completed form should be sent to the Director of IP and a copy should be kept on site. For programs without an on-site faculty or staff leader, the IP staff member who receives the initial report should fill out the form and file it with the Director. Copies of the form are included in the leader manuals, and included with this policy document in the Appendix.

**II: IP Determines Whether the Emergency is Real or Perceived:**

A. IP will gather as much information as is necessary to determine what risks, if any, study abroad participants are facing. In assessing these risks, appropriate people and organizations will be contacted, by telephone if at all possible.

B. In assessing whether the emergency is real or perceived, the appropriate IP staff member will contact the appropriate sources for detailed and accurate information:

**1. The following people and organizations may be contacted.** The IP staff member determining the status of the crisis will check off these contacts if and as they are made:

- The faculty/staff member at the site abroad (check the overseas contacts list);
- The U.S. State Department Desk Officer of the country affected (calls 202/647-4000 or 202/663-0533 for the specific contact information or check the state department web page [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)) or a consular official at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest to the program site.

**2. The appropriate IP staff member may find it useful to contact the following organizations** as well:

- The U.S. State Department's Citizens Emergency Center, in cases of serious illness, death, financial crisis due to theft, or arrest: call (202) 647-5225 8:15 a.m.-5:00 p.m. M-F and 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Saturdays; after hours, call (202) 647-5226; after 10 p.m. call (202) 647-1512, and ask for the Citizen Emergency Center Duty Officer.
- U.S. State Department Task Force activated in 2001 to assist U.S. citizens. The Task Force is operational 24 hours a day. The toll free number is 1-888-407-4747. Callers who are unable to use 800 numbers, such as those calling from overseas, can call the Task Force at 1-317-472-2328.
- The U.S. Embassy in the appropriate country (check the State Department web page for contact information-<http://travel.state.gov>)
- For long-standing crises, the U.S. State Department sometimes creates special Task Forces to monitor them; for background information on such crises, call the State Department's Operations Center, Office of Crisis Management at (202) 647-0900.
- For information concerning a terrorist threat or action, call the State Department's counter terrorist office at (202) 647-9892.
- Local safety/crime agencies in the host country. Discuss with on-site contact and U.S. Embassy in host country before proceeding.
- Other U.S. universities and colleges with programs in the same city or country may prove useful as well; consult Academic Year Abroad (published by IIE) for the most recent program listings.

If a crisis is more general and likely to affect more than the UWSP programs, IP will stay in touch with NAFSA's SECUSS-L network. NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors) also may organize an operations center for the dissemination of information, as was done during the Persian Gulf War.

CISI (Council on International Education Exchange) may also have useful information, because of their extensive international networks; call (212) 822-2600.

If the emergency is medical in nature (a reported outbreak of a particular disease), check the Center for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or phone 800/311-3435 or 404/639-3311.

C. The IP staff member will ask for information about a number of issues, and will take careful notes of sufficient detail so as to be able to write a chronological sequence of events leading up to, during, and after the emergency. He or she will use the following as a basic checklist during conversations:

**1. Universal concerns to be addressed:**

- What is the current physical and psychological condition of affected participant(s)?
- Is the lead on-site staff member now in close contact with all affected participants?
- What is the proximity of the event(s) to all program participants?
- What is the imminent risk to participant(s) if they remain where they are?
- Are all program participants, whether directly involved or not, aware of the emergency? How are they responding to the emergency?
- Are adequate food, water and medical attention available?
- Is adequate and secure housing available? How long will this housing be available? What other appropriate housing options are available as a backup, if needed?
- What information should be given to students in the event that the situation worsens? Has the program leader reviewed plans for contacting students? What are the instructions to be given to students regarding locations to meet or should they be advised to return to and remain in their regular housing?
- Should students be evacuated? Should the students be moved to another location within the country? To a neighboring country? To the U.S.?

## **2. Incident-specific issues:**

**If a participant(s) has fallen seriously ill:** Has the CISI emergency line for evacuation been contacted? What medical treatment has he or she received? Does the attending physician speak English? What is the diagnosis? The prescribed treatment? The prognosis? Are other participants at risk from this illness? Is airlift a desirable and viable action? Does the student have the necessary financial resources to pay for bills or will the program cover these expenses to be reimbursed by the student at a later date?

**If a participant has been seriously injured:** Has the CISI emergency line for evacuation been contacted? What are the details of the accident? What has the on-site response been? Does the attending physician speak English? Where has the participant been taken? What is the diagnosis? The prescribed treatment? The prognosis? Is airlift a desirable and viable action?

**If a participant has been assaulted or raped:** What are the details of the incident? What has the on-site response been? Where has the participant been taken? If a sexual assault, is counseling available? Counseling in English? Has the closest U.S. consulate or embassy been contacted for advice regarding reporting the incident? Has appropriate local law enforcement been notified? What is the medical diagnosis? The prescribed treatment? The prognosis? Is the participant interested in returning to the U.S.? If so, what will the likely academic/ financial consequences be? Are the participant and the counselor aware of these consequences?

**If a participant is missing:** When was the student last seen? Does anyone have any idea about where they might have gone? If the student had left and was expected to return at a specific time, when was the date and time of the expected return? Did the participant tell anyone of plans to be absent? Are search and rescue operations available on site? Are these reliable? Have they already been initiated? Should they be initiated? If other students are enlisted to form search parties, have they been adequately briefed on what to do if they find the missing participant? On the various scenarios they may encounter? If you have determined that the student is truly likely to be missing, proceed with the following questions: Have the local missing persons officials been notified? What is the case number? Has the Embassy been contacted?

**If a student has been arrested:** Has he or she been detained? Has the U.S. Embassy been notified? What has their response been? What is their advice? What agency made the arrest and filed the charges? What are the names, addresses and phone numbers of arresting authorities? What is the case number? What rights have been granted? Is he/she entitled to place a phone call? Is appropriate legal counsel available?

**If a student has been taken hostage:** Has the U.S. Embassy been notified? What is the Embassy's advice? Have the kidnappers made contact? Is negotiation support available on site? Who is the contact person at the Embassy, and at the State Department in Washington, D.C.? What are their titles and contact numbers?

**If the emergency is political in nature, or if a natural or man-made disaster has occurred:** Has the U.S. Embassy advised participants to take appropriate action? Have all participants been made aware of these precautions, and in writing? Are all participants following these

precautions? Have local authorities imposed a curfew? Is travel in or out of the country being restricted in any way? Is the group in danger? Who or what is the target of any unrest? Has any particular group or organization been threatened? What kind of military or other security or public safety personnel are present? Are they unusually visible? How are they behaving with respect to the civilian population? Is airlift a desirable and viable action?

### **3. Acquiring Important Contact Information:**

What are the current telephone numbers of participants involved, including the local staff? Fax and E-mail numbers? If a phone tree among participants has not been established, it should be at this time (the establishment of the tree should include instructions telling students to call the program leader or the next level if their immediate contact cannot be reached). Have all students been reminded of the contact numbers for on-site staff and for the UWSP office?

For our records, what are the names, addresses, telephone, fax and E-mail numbers of the attending physician(s), clinic(s) and/or other health professionals involved? What is the name and contact numbers of the person, if any, who is providing translation services in this crisis?

Confirm that the on-site staff has the names, titles, addresses, telephone, fax and E-mail numbers of the appropriate officials at the U.S. Embassy, and at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Confirm that the on-site staff has the names, titles, addresses, telephone, fax and E-mail numbers of any local law enforcement or public security officials involved? Do these people speak English? What is the name and contact numbers of the local translator who is involved?

**III. IP Determines that the Emergency is Perceived and is Not Widespread.** It is important, at this stage, to control the dissemination of information: information must be shared responsibly, on a need-to-know basis. IP staff will have to decide on the appropriate action.

#### **Response Scenario A: appropriate when the perceived emergency has not yet created widespread or persistent rumors:**

1. The Director of IP or her/his representative will take appropriate steps to defuse the situation and reassure concerned parties.
2. In most cases, IP will need to do no more at this point than reassure the concerned parent, student or other individual who has contacted IP as the result of media coverage or rumor. The IP staff member who calls back the party who registered the concern in the first place should tell him or her that appropriate inquiries have been made, that we are confident program participants are secure, that the program is proceeding normally, and that the participants' welfare is being provided for, as before.
3. The Director of the IP will make sure that all administrative and professional members of the IP staff are aware of what has occurred, and what the concerned parties have been told; it is important that all members of the staff be able to provide the same information in case other inquiries are received.

4. Parents who request it can be given the telephone number of the appropriate Embassy abroad. However, this information should not be offered to them as a matter of course: U.S. Embassies abroad will not appreciate receiving calls from overwrought individuals, especially when there is no emergency. Program leaders can offer to provide the office number of the local staff or contact. Home phone numbers of local staff or contacts should be given out only after the leader has contacted the local staff. It is helpful to remind distraught parents about the difference in time; especially in the early reporting of an emergency before it has been determined if an emergency is real.

5. The staff member handling the emergency should prepare a simple statement, check it with the Director if possible, and provide it to the front desk as a first line of information to answer calls. All calls on the matter should be forwarded to the Director or staff person handling the emergency if they are free.

**Response Scenario B: When a rumor is widespread and unusually persistent, and growing numbers of individuals, on or off campus, believe that an emergency really has occurred, or that participants are at risk:**

1. The Director of the IP or designee will write a very brief and accurate description of the perceived emergency, and will then deliver or fax it to, and/or speak individually with:

- a. The UWSP Crisis Management Team (See Appendix)
- b. All members of the IP staff.

2. If the IP Director deems it appropriate, IP staff may provide information about the perceived emergency, and about the University's response, to the person or persons listed as emergency contacts of program participants. The information will be substantively the same as that contained in the description distributed to the individuals in 1a and 1b listed above.

**IV. IP Determines that the Emergency is Real.**

**Response Scenario A: The emergency is real and universal**

1. If a staff member has been handling the report, the Director will be informed immediately. If the Director of IP is not available, the Associate Director should be contacted.

The Director of IP will consult with the primary local staff or contact and other appropriate people abroad and in the U.S. in order to decide what specific measures should be taken in responding to the crisis.

2. Once the appropriate response strategy has been determined by working with the UWSP Crisis Management Team, the Director of IP will send a fax or otherwise communicate with the Faculty/Staff Leader or primary local contact and the affected students; this communication will contain a detailed description of the course of action to be followed in responding to the crisis. Students will be provided with verbal or written instructions as is appropriate to the situation. If the matter is sufficiently serious, the Faculty/Staff Leader or local contact will see to it that all

program participants acknowledge receipt of this information in writing. The primary local contact will fax the signed acknowledgments to the Director of IP as soon as is practicable.

3. In conjunction with the UWSP Crisis Management Team, the Director of IP will take into account the following points in developing the written course of action:

- a. Include a reasonable amount of detail in drafting the procedures;
- b. Reassure participants that everything is being done to assure their security and well being, and that we are counting on their cooperation in responding to the crisis;
- c. Tell participants that while it is not possible to eliminate all risk, we've had experience dealing with emergencies in the past, and that we'll work with them in order to respond effectively;
- d. Tell participants that we are in contact with their emergency contacts (usually parents) if such contact has been made;
- e. Direct participants to stay in close touch with the faculty or staff leader or primary local contact. Inform the contact of their precise whereabouts throughout the crisis: Report any suspicious persons, packages, or contacts to him or her; Remind them of the main office in the U.S. number as an emergency contact in case they cannot reach their local contact;
- f. Tell the participants to register with the U.S. Embassy or the nearest Consulate, and to maintain contact with them throughout the crisis;
- g. Tell participants to exercise common sense in responding to the crisis, and to avoid contact with or travel to the affected area (if they are not located at this area);
- h. If appropriate to the emergency, direct the program leader or local staff and participants to remove all signs or any other objects, at the academic center or at their living situation, that would call attention to them or to the program;
- i. Tell participants to keep a low profile, to avoid dress and behavior, which will attract attention, to avoid using luggage tags, and to avoid places where Americans are known to congregate.

4. If the event is of sufficient seriousness to warrant it, the Director of IP will work with the Director of News Services to write a brief and accurate description of the event, and will then distribute it. The Director will also develop a written strategy, consulting with the UWSP Crisis Management Team and will then distribute these documents to the following people or their designated representative: Chancellor,

- a. Provost and Line Officers,
- b. Director of Safety and Loss Control,
- c. Director of News Services,
- d. IP Staff.

5. Once the description has been written and delivered or faxed to the above individuals, the front office or any IP staff member who is contacted will direct all media requests for information to the Director. In managing these requests, IP staff will make every effort to be cooperative, while at the same time letting the media know that IP needs to avoid giving out information that might violate a student's right to confidentiality or endanger the student(s) in question in any way.
6. If contacted, the Office of News Services will provide no more information to the media than that contained in the Director's description; that Office will also coordinate and arrange with the Director all press requests for interviews.
7. The Directors of IP and News Services will develop a strategy to handle all requests for information, including those coming in from parents, students and other members of the UWSP community.
8. Depending on circumstances, the Director of IP will contact the emergency contacts of program participants (as indicated on the study abroad application form) in order to provide accurate information about the emergency, and about the University's response. The information contained will be substantively the same as that contained in the description distributed to the individuals in #4 above.

**Response Scenario B: the emergency is real and particular to an individual student.**

1. The Director of IP will contact the Faculty/Staff Leader or local contact and other appropriate people abroad and in the U.S. in order to discuss with them how to handle the situation. The IP Director will be sure that all appropriate steps are taken at this point to assure the immediate safety and welfare of the participant. The director will inform the student (directly or through a local contact) that a family/emergency contact will be notified unless the student has already done so if the emergency is sufficiently serious to warrant the contact.
2. Contact the student's family/emergency contact as listed on the study abroad application.
3. Provide information to the family as they decide how the situation should be handled.
4. Facilitate the family's plan to the extent possible. In the event that the family needs to obtain passports, the family can contact the State Department Citizen's Emergency Center (contact information is listed in Section II B. 2 of this document) and ask for the appropriate duty officer.

**Response in a Special Case: Death of a Program Participant:**

- A. The Director of IP will ask the Faculty/Staff Leader or local contact at the site to send IP a fax, immediately, with complete details about the circumstances surrounding the death, confirmation that CISI has been contacted to arrange for repatriation of remains, confirmation that the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy in the country has been contacted, and detailed information regarding burial or repatriation of remains, including any police or immigration procedures that need to be observed. The Director of IP will inform the on site staff that the

participant's family may be calling him or her once they've been informed of the death. When there is no leader on site, the local host institution will be contacted to seek assistance.

B. The Director of IP will consult with the Assistant Chancellor for Student Affairs regarding notification of next of kin. After this is done, IP will notify appropriate individuals on campus, including the Chancellor, Provost and Line Officers, the Dean of the student's college and the Director of News Services, and the Director of Safety and Loss Control.

[While responsibility for the creation of this document rests with IP, we wish to acknowledge consulting with a document on managing emergencies prepared by UW-Madison for use on its campus].

Eric Yonke  
Director, International Programs

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## Appendix 1

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
International Programs

### INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of Person Filing this Report:

Name of Program:

Today's Date:

Time and Date of Incident/Accident:

Local time/date:

Stevens Point time/date:

Name of Student(s) Involved:

Nature of Incident:

How and when did you hear about the incident?

From whom?

Was medical attention offered to the student?                      Yes                      No

⇒ If no, why not?

Did the student accept the offer to seek medical attention?    Yes                      No

⇒ If no, why not?

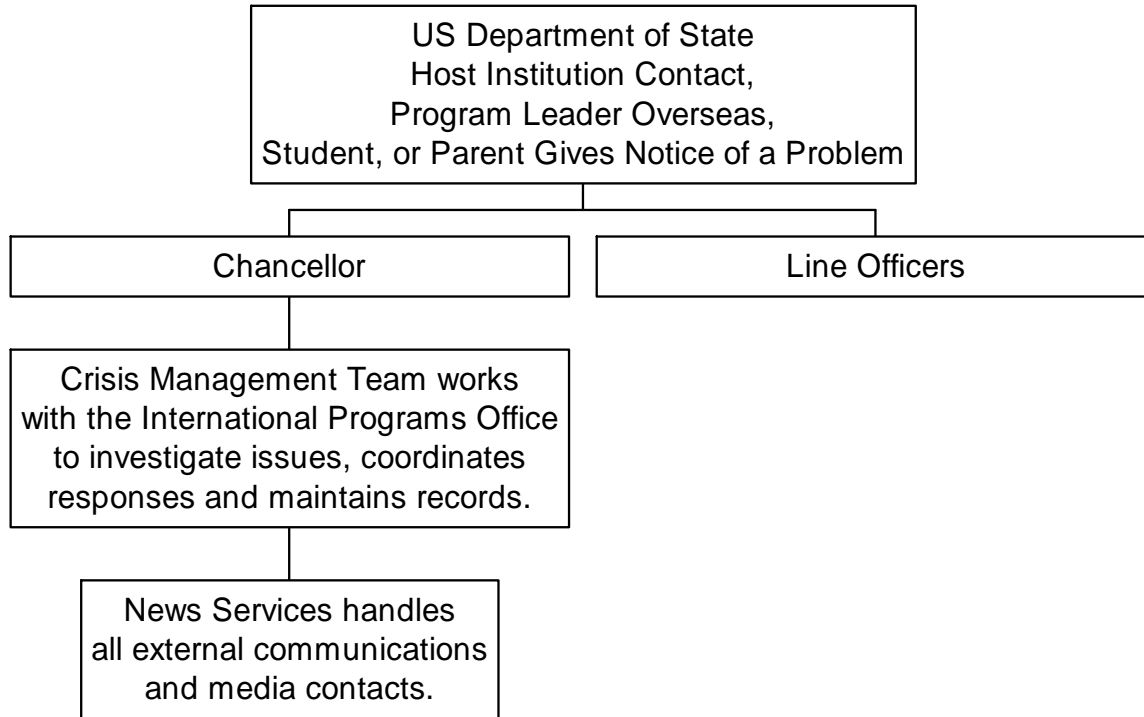
If yes, where was the student taken? (name and address of doctor and hospital)

⇒ What was the result?



Follow-up information should include: dates and times, persons contacted or who have contacted you, actions taken, additional phone or contact numbers. These notes should append to a final report, kept in the student's file, and/or forwarded to the International Programs Office.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
Overseas Crisis on Study Abroad Programs  
Communication Tree



**Appendix 2**  
**University Crisis Management Team**

Here are the members of the University Crisis Team. In the event of a campus crisis, the following team members will meet. Activation of this meeting is initiated by contacting and discussing the crisis with any team member. The team member will call the other team members to arrange a time and place to meet. **All numbers function with area code (715).**

<b>Team Member Name</b>	<b>Office Phone</b>	<b>Home Phone</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
<b>Linda Bunnell</b> Chancellor	346-2123	344-9521	715-340-0532	346-4841
<b>(and/or)</b>				
<b>Mark Nook</b> Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	346-4686	544-4097	715-630-0088	346-4132
<b>(and/or)</b>				
<b>Robert Tomlinson</b> Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	346-3716	457-6807	715-340-9980	346-2561
<b>(and/or)</b>				
<b>Greg Diemer</b> Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs	346-2641 346-4028	693-0235	715-212-4595	346-3957
<b>(and)</b>				
<b>Senior Officers as appropriate to crisis</b>				
<b>Bill Hettler</b> Interim Counseling Center Director	346-3111	345-1735	715-340-1000	346- 4752
<b>Stephen Ward</b> Executive Director and Assistant to the Chancellor for University Relations and Communications	346-3827		715-630-4633	346-2042
<b>Mick Veum</b> Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel, Budget, Grants & Summer Session	346-3710	342-1970	715-252-0713	346-4132
<b>Bill Rowe</b> Protective Services Director	346-3972	295-9602	715-340-5830	346-3780
<b>Jeff Karcher</b> Safety and Loss Control Director	346-3901	343-2834	715-498-9239	346-3780
<b>UWSP Protective Services- 24 hrs/day</b>	<b>346-3456</b>			

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**Do Not Release**

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