Crisis Information Management (CIM)
Colleges and Universities

Communications and Messaging

Most colleges and universities have emergency response plans (ERP's) that have been tested in concert with municipal responders. But, not all organizations are satisfied they can communicate quickly, accurately, and consistently with administration, faculty, students, and other stakeholders including media, especially when incidents occur that demand it. *IRI* experts have developed the **Crisis Information Management** (CIM) program that addresses messaging content and delivery guidelines in concert with the "five C's": communications reach, coordination, conditions, circumstances, and cautions. The **CIM** program dovetails with the organization's mass communications systems including text, email, voice, and media messaging.

Improving efficiency: the "GAP"

The **CIM** program also addresses three key objectives: shortening the time-gap from recognition of an event to the first message; filling the missing informational gaps once alerts have been disseminated; and avoiding the gap of not informing constituents that an event has concluded. For some, launching the first message is the most difficult; but it becomes more difficult when the media has started second guessing before the first message goes out. Alerts, action steps, intermittent information, and resolution messages have to be managed consistently, with continuity, and in step with incident command and "crisis and emergency risk communications" (CERC) principles. Who should launch the first message, and under what circumstances? And, importantly, what should the first message say? And those that follow? Is there time to compose messages as incidents unfold? And who does that? When sudden, material events occur, carrier capacity may be overwhelmed. *IRI* professionals and the **CIM** program can help you improve communication efficiency, with greater reach, with pertinent information, in a timely way.

Communication is everything

Messaging is crucial in high stress situations. Weather related events, for example, may have lead time allowing for a better match with municipal and mass media announcements. Public health related events may be localized such that timely informational and instructional messages may fit particular circumstances. Sudden events, such as a shooting incident in progress may also be localized calling for universal messages even when all the details of the situation are conflicting. Downward communication controlled by those authorized can be predetermined; upward communication including reports from faculty members, staff, students, visitors, will be random. There may be no time to verify accuracy of random reports. *IRI* can help you determine how messaging is launched, by whom, and what criteria should be used to launch the first alerts.

Pre-scripting messages

Federal and state level emergency planning guidance recommends pre-scripting messaging to fit various scenarios. This may call for 70 to over 300 different pre-determined messages. Individuals charged with launching messages will need to constantly review such messages to be better prepared especially with the first message launch. There are many permutations, yet there are ways messages can be pre-assembled saving time while minimizing the potential for corrections. *IRI* professionals can help you decide how to sequence messages to avoid confusion and minimize vulnerability.

The **CIM** program is designed to be collaborative with consensus building toward "best practices" for your circumstances. Your risk mitigation strategies will be enhanced; and expectations for a more secure and safe campus environment will be better met.