

# Yale University

## Crisis Communication Plan



As followed by the Yale University Staff & Faculty

Fall 2023



## Table of Contents

<b>Overview of Yale University.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Crisis.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose and Communication Objectives.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Rehearsal Dates.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>List of Key Publics/Stakeholders.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Crisis Communications Team.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Media Spokesperson.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Crisis Communication Control Center.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Primary location.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Secondary &amp; Off-site location.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Local Media Contacts.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Media holding statements.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Social Media Posts.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Instagram.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Facebook.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Related Agencies and Resources.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Official Social Media Accounts.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>FAQs?.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Evaluation Procedure.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Yale Facts.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Checklist For Establishing a News Conference Center.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Spokesperson Guidelines.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>General Guidelines.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Key Messaging.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Interview tips.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>18</b>



## **Overview of Yale University**

Founded in 1701, Yale University is a private institution with a total undergraduate enrollment of 6,645 students. Its campus is 373 acres in the city. Yale utilizes a semester-based academic calendar. This private institution is an Ivy-League school with an acceptance rate of 5.3%.

At Yale University, we strive to create a safe, happy, and healthy learning environment for all students attending and considering attending the institution. It is our responsibility as a college campus to make sure everything runs smoothly and students are happy. That being said, this crisis communication plan discusses the topics of what to do in a global pandemic all the way down to a crisis such as school shootings and lockdowns. It is important to provide and keep these safety measures in place to allow for a proper education for our students.

## **The Crisis**

This crisis is regarding what Yale University's next steps would be for the global pandemic. It is important to think about and acknowledge how Yale will address this because we would want to eliminate the spread of a pandemic on the college campus as much as possible. In doing so, here are some steps to be put into place:

- Create hybrid/fully remote learning courses
- Masks should be worn on college grounds at all times
- Testing for illness will occur bi-weekly to those attending classes on campus
- Blocking off certain seats in classrooms to keep proper social distancing
- Having ill students attend classes fully remote until a negative test is presented

By sticking with these set of rules to put in place, it will help Yale University maintain a healthy environment as much as possible.

## **Purpose and Communication Objectives**

The key purpose of Yale University and our Crisis Communication Team is to always communicate the accident/incident facts and information as accurate and fast as possible, updating information regularly as any and all circumstances change, to make sure the safety of Yale University and the campus operations are under control and properly taken care of.

- Implement immediate actions to:
  - Define the issue at hand
  - Identify key audiences that must be notified of the incident
  - Communicate the issue/problem in a timely manner
  - Provide effective communication to the public



- Monitor all media such as broadcast, print, radio, social media, etc. that might cover the incident and spread false rumors
- Restore trust and confidence within the community

The Crisis Communication Team will meet on a regular basis as well as right before big campus events. Here, they will discuss the following:

- Review of past actions
- Developing strategic plans to keep Yale University in a positive light to the public
- Draft an annual report regarding Yale University's tools and procedures

The Crisis Communication Team meetings will be chaired by the Executive Director of Yale U News to make sure there is always a form of consistency.

Subcommittees of the Crisis Communications Team may also be formed to speak on certain topics or study areas requiring more in depth review. These subcommittees or working groups may involve or invite other Yale University Departments to participate on an as-needed basis to provide technical support or subject matter expertise.

## **Rehearsal Dates**

Rehearsals for fire drills will occur during the first two weeks of every fall semester and spring semester as students begin to get adjusted with their classes and schedules. Before the drill takes place, administration will be notified so they can readily prepare if it occurs during a lesson.

Other rehearsal dates for other issues will take place on the following days:

<b>Incident/Problem At Hand</b>	<b>Rehearsal Date</b>
Parent Complaint to Administration	Sporadically throughout the academic year, typically around September/October (internally with staff)
Student/Staff Says Racial Slur/Derogatory Term On Campus	November of the fall semester and March of the spring semester
Power Outage On Campus	Sporadically throughout the academic year, typically around September/October
School Shooting/Lockdown	Sporadically throughout the academic year, typically around September/October for the fall semester and January/February for the



	spring semester
--	-----------------

While not all of these can be practiced, it is important to be well prepared and have the Crisis Communications Team willing and able to solve the problem as effectively and fast as possible.



**List of Key Publics/Stakeholders**

<b>Key Publics/Stakeholders</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Yale University Students	They attend and pay for their education at Yale University
Yale Applicants	They apply and are intrigued in attending the institution
Yale University Professors	They dedicate their time and energy to educating Yale University students
Staff and Other Employees at Yale University	Like professors, they dedicate their time and energy to Yale University as a whole



## **Crisis Communications Team**

The primary objective of the crisis communication team is to inform internal and external stakeholders, including students, employees, community members and the media, with timely, accurate and consistent information. This will ensure that all parties are informed during crises, and that information is disseminated responsibly and reliably.

Our crisis communications team consists of following:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Expertise</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Peter Salovey	President	Leadership	<a href="mailto:president@yale.edu">president@yale.edu</a> 203-432-2550
George Hines	Director of Emergency Management	Emergency Response	<a href="mailto:george.hines@yale.edu">george.hines@yale.edu</a> 203-436-4395
Jennifer Nolan	Associate Director of Emergency Management	Emergency Response	<a href="mailto:jennifer.nolan@yale.edu">jennifer.nolan@yale.edu</a> 203-432-8939
Dr. Jason Fish	CEO of Yale Health	Health Services	203-432-0246
Karen Peart*	Interim Vice President for Communications	Communications	203-432-1345 <a href="mailto:karen.peart@yale.edu">karen.peart@yale.edu</a>
Yun Xie*	Director of Communications	Communications	yun.xie@yale.edu 203-432-2559
Bess Connolly*	Media Relations Coordinator	Media Relations	203-410-5032 <a href="mailto:elizabeth.connolly@yale.edu">elizabeth.connolly@yale.edu</a>
Cynthia Dreier	Senior Administrative Assistant	Support	cynthia.dreier@yale.edu 203-432-2550

*\* indicates the designated media contacts.*

## **Media Spokesperson**

President Peter Salovey serves as our primary spokesperson. In the event that he is unavailable, Dr. Jason Fish, Chief Executive Officer of Yale Health and our interim Vice President for Communications, Karen Peart, and are our backup spokespeople, in that order.



## **Crisis Communication Control Center**

### **Primary location**

If a crisis occurs, the Crisis Communication Team will meet on the second floor of the President's office located at 3 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06511.

### **Secondary & Off-site location**

In the event that the primary location is not accessible due to a crisis, the Crisis Communication Control Center will be relocated to the Omni New Haven Hotel, which is located at 155 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06510. The meeting will be held on the 15th floor, with the meeting room TBD.

The Crisis Communications Team must:

- Bring university-issued laptop and charger
- Bring cell phone and charger

Primary and Secondary locations will provide:

- Conference room
- Tables and chairs to accommodate the CCT
- WiFi and Hotspots
- AirPlay display for screen sharing
- Space for one-on-one interviews
- Press conference room

If required, the Senior Administrative Assistant will coordinate with IT staff to:

- Set-up audio/video equipment to hold a press conference





## **Local Media Contacts**

<b>Media</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Website</b>
Yale Daily News	<b>Print/Online</b>	(203) 432-2400 <a href="mailto:editor@yaledailynews.com">editor@yaledailynews.com</a>	<a href="http://yaledailynews.com">yaledailynews.com</a>
New Haven Register	<b>Print/Online</b>	203-680-9379 <a href="mailto:al.santangelo@hearstmediaact.com">al.santangelo@hearstmediaact.com</a>	<a href="http://Nhregister.com">Nhregister.com</a>
La Voz Hispana de Connecticut	<b>Print/Online</b>	203-865-2272 <a href="mailto:info@lavozhispanact.com">info@lavozhispanact.com</a>	<a href="http://Lavozhispanact.com">Lavozhispanact.com</a>
WVIT NBC Connecticut	<b>Television</b>	860-521-3030 <a href="mailto:news@nbconnecticut.com">news@nbconnecticut.com</a>	<a href="http://nbconnecticut.com">nbconnecticut.com</a>
Telemundo Nueva Inglaterra	<b>Television</b>	617-630-3300 <a href="mailto:noticiastelemundoboston@nbcuni.com">noticiastelemundoboston@nbcuni.com</a>	<a href="http://Telemundonuevainglaterra.com">Telemundonuevainglaterra.com</a>
WTNH/WCTX (ABC affiliate)	<b>Television</b>	203-784-8888 <a href="mailto:reportit@wtnh.com">reportit@wtnh.com</a>	<a href="http://wtnh.com">wtnh.com</a>
WFSB (CBS affiliate)	<b>Television</b>	860-244-1700 <a href="mailto:newsdesk3@wfsb.com">newsdesk3@wfsb.com</a>	<a href="http://wfsb.com">wfsb.com</a>
WTIC-TV (Fox affiliate)	<b>Television</b>	860-727-0082 <a href="mailto:newstips@fox61.com">newstips@fox61.com</a>	<a href="http://fox61.com">fox61.com</a>
WUVN Hartford (Univision affiliate)	<b>Television</b>	860-278-1818 <a href="mailto:pbias@entravision.com">pbias@entravision.com</a>	<a href="http://noticiasya.com/hartford-springfield">noticiasya.com/hartford-springfield</a>
Connecticut Public Radio (PBS/NPR)	<b>Radio</b>	860-275-7272 <a href="mailto:news@ctpublic.org">news@ctpublic.org</a>	<a href="http://ctpublic.org">ctpublic.org</a>



## **Media holding statements**

### **Statement 1**

We were recently notified that [situation] occurred on [date and time]. Please note that Yale University is working diligently to resolve this situation as soon as possible. At this time we can confirm [details]. Rest assured that our top priority is the safety and well-being of our community. We will keep you updated on this issue through our social media channels, website and local media outlets until this issue is resolved.

### **Statement 2**

We have been closely monitoring the global pandemic and unfortunately, due to this unprecedented crisis, [situation] has arisen affecting Yale University. Rest assured that we are working diligently by [actions being taken] in response to [situation], and to minimize the impact on our campus. Ensuring the health and safety of our students, employees, and community is our top priority.

For real-time updates on this situation, please visit our dedicated webpage at [insert URL]. We are committed to keeping you informed of any new developments through our social media channels, email and local media outlets until the situation is under complete control.

### **Statement 3**

In response to a recent global pandemic, we want to assure you that your safety and wellbeing is our top priority. Due to [this situation], Yale University will be implementing additional safety measures that include [safety measures] effective *immediately* [or insert date].

For the most up-to-date information on this matter, please visit our dedicated webpage at [insert URL]. In addition to updating this webpage, our communications team will share important updates to social media platforms, email and local media.

Your cooperation, understanding, and commitment to everyone's well-being are appreciated.



## **Social Media Posts**

### **Instagram**

Due to the unforeseen circumstances and implemented guidelines from the CDC, it is necessary that we inform you that Yale University will begin its transition into the pandemic protocol as per our global pandemic crisis plan. Students can earn access to the remainder of the plan and what this transition means for them at the link in our bio and throughout our schools' resources.

Students, we strive to continue to support each one of you as we all learn to navigate a new lifestyle and the circumstances that come with it. We hope to hear from all of our students, and we look forward to implementing any recommendations and feedback we may receive from our Bull Dog community. Stay safe, Bull Dogs.

### **Facebook**

Due to the unforeseen circumstances and implemented guidelines from the CDC, it is necessary that we inform you that Yale University will begin its transition into the pandemic protocol as per our global pandemic crisis plan. Students can earn access to the remainder of the plan and what this transition means for them at the link in our bio and throughout our schools' resources.

At this time, we encourage our BullDog community to stay connected as best and they can and we ask that our BullDog parents support their children during these difficult times. We acknowledge the severity of the situation, and we thank you in advance as we make this transition as smooth as possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at any time with any questions, comments, or concerns. Stay safe, Bull Dogs.



## **Related Agencies and Resources**

- CDC
  - <https://www.cdc.gov>
- WHO
  - <https://www.who.int>
- Yale Health Center
  - <https://yalehealth.yale.edu>

## **Official Social Media Accounts**

Find updates on our previously existing social media accounts:

### Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/yale/>

### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/YaleUniversity>

### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/yale>

### LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/school/yale-university/>

### YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/YaleUniversity>



## **FAQs?**

### How will this impact the student's education and future?

Here at Yale, we strive to provide all our students with only the best education and the best experience. While we cannot guarantee what will develop throughout the US in the upcoming weeks, what we can guarantee is that we will continue to support our students in any extenuating circumstances due to these uncertain times.

### What will be done regarding tuition and funds?

We are aware of the unexpected financial hardships that may arise for many students and families during these times. We are working on implementing a 'frozen tuition' to help ease the stress of affording constantly increasing tuition without appropriate reflected actions. We are committed to customizing specialized offers for students who contact the financial aid department.

### What actions and additional resources will be provided to better ease students through this transition, and how long will they remain available for?

All professors, faculty, and staff will be briefed about updated expectations in virtual classroom settings. We are committed to offering continued support even beyond the initial beginnings and changes that may arise.

## **Evaluation Procedure**

### Was there any way to predict this crisis?

No matter what the extent of today's technology can help us understand, we still lack the skills to predict the future, further regarding any pandemics. Unfortunately, there may never be any perfect way to determine something that simply only might happen. What we can confidently say is the changed ways and preparations that will be implemented into action to further prevent the previous plans and the unfortunate events of our own actions.

### Were any warning signs missed? What were they and why were they missed?

Each situation is entirely unique. Similarly to understanding the measures implemented to change the trajectory of the previous plans, there is little to no way to confidently predict and analyze any warning signs. There are measures in place to evaluate the possibilities of potential warning signs. With the help of our trusted partners, community, and both local and federal government, we can ensure that everything in our power is being done to the best of our abilities



with the best of our resources to better provide and prevent future outcomes becoming worse than past ones.

What could have been improved?

With each passing scenario allows room for growth and development. Here at Yale we strive to use each and every one of these situations both large and small to our advantage by noting what was successful in its execution against what was not. It is important to understand that every plan may have minimal flaws with the opportunities to make changes for the betterment of everyone involved.

Was information distributed through only one person?

It is eagerly important that information is distributed as efficiently and effectively as possible to best accommodate our community. With the help of our extended staff and further developed crisis plan, there is ample ways for two-way communication systems as well as the capability to handle the increased volume of virtual communication that may be necessarily implemented at a moments' notice. If any information were to be distributed from only a singular person, it is important to watch out for scammers and false information becoming circulated into the media. It is our hope that our community will only share helpful insight as well as circulate confirmed, definitely verified information on social media and the internet.

Was there any miscommunication? If so, where and how?

Undoubtedly, it is detrimental to allow the flow of false information throughout a campus community with malintentions. Our officials will only allow and enhance circulation amongst the students that they deem credible, necessary, helpful, and insightful during these dire times. Yale is determined to only allow the best for its community but is wholeheartedly invested in the health and safety of everyone in its community. Permitting that false information were to become available and apparent within the Yale community, our staff assigned to the case will definitely work as best as they can to report and remove the falsified information by replacing it with the corrected, verified information by trusted sources.

What can be done better next time for a more prepared plan?

The goal is to achieve a better response plan than the last in order to best provide for the community as well as those directly affected. It is our hope that this new and improved plan can help us better ourselves and as a result the outcomes both locally, nationally, and internationally. With the help of our trained staff, invested students and staff, accessible resources, and our never ending spirits, there is nothing the Yale community cannot overcome together. We are confident



that these new procedures and protocols will infinitely improve our response and our communal outlooks while navigating the realities of our daily lives.

## **Appendix**

### **Yale Facts**

Yale is home to 6,590 undergraduate students, 5,344 graduate students, and almost 11,000 staff members as recent as the 2022-2023 academic year. Located in New Haven, CT convenient to the tri-state area while continuing outreach to the nation and international locations.

Yale is proud to house countless areas of studies for students to flourish and excel in their areas of expertise. With ongoing lists of donors, partners, and associated organizations, Yale prides themselves on the extensive resources made available to all students and staff.

Yale University strives with the ongoing support of the students, staff, Yale families, and partners. The more invested into the community, the more positive responses that are produced as a result. There is always an ongoing support system simply a phone call away.

As a response to not only the ongoing crisis but the ongoing influx of support from financial aid offices both on and off campus to ensure the continued best education without interruption of hardships along the way.

Yale works to maintain the outstanding status of an Ivy league university with only the utmost support and resources for some of the most advanced, dedicated students in the country and worldwide. It is both a privilege and honor to hold this recognition.

We at Yale understand the inconceivable circumstances these times have brought all of us, both students, staff, and those directly affected elsewhere.



## Checklist For Establishing a News Conference Center

In the event of a newsworthy development either locally or nationally, in an attempt to have extensive outreach to both community leaders and Yale families nationwide, there lies an importance of the congregation of said potential news conference center. The atmosphere, environment, and convenience create for an importantly designed workspace to allow a sense of community and maintain a professional environment. In the case of a local urgency, the news conference will be located at the on campus Davenport Pierson Auditorium. In the case of a national emergency, the news conference will be held at the on campus Off Broadway Theater, accommodating a larger crowd up to 150.

Day of the Conference expectations:

1. Punctuality, professionalism, and appropriate visible emotions are expected from all staff
2. An accommodating floor plan for the expected amount of attendees
3. Preliminary briefing for participants about the circumstances
4. Appoint specific roles for necessary responsibilities throughout the news conference
5. Prepare virtual participation
6. Provide only confirmed and definitive information without making promises or guarantees
7. Hold Q+A with closing statements

Further directions:

1. Remain calm, professional, and realistic before, during, and directly after the news conference
2. Be confident but not aggressive
3. Always agree to discuss any lingering appropriate topics that arise in conjunction to the problem at hand
4. Always tell the truth
5. Never disclose any unconfirmed information





## Spokesperson Guidelines

### General Guidelines

The designated spokesperson will serve as the official voice of Yale University and handle media inquiries during a crisis. This individual will provide relevant and timely updates with clear and accurate information. The main goal is to ensure that the media coverage presents a balanced perspective and includes only factual details.

### Key Messaging

During the interview, the spokesperson will emphasize three key messages:

1. Provide a clear account of the crisis.
2. Discuss the impact of the incident and its implications for future developments.
3. Outline the following steps and potential solutions.

These key messages will be supported by relevant facts to ensure a well-rounded and informative discussion.

### Interview tips

1. Prepare an opening statement and read it before responding to any reporter questions.
2. Keep responses short, impactful and to the point
3. Do not ignore questions or say “no comment” and instead explain why you can’t respond
4. Stay calm and be courteous
5. Do not assign blame

If you need more time to consider a response:

1. Ask for clarification
2. Stop and think
3. Do not speculate—if you do not know the answer tell reporters you will find out and be sure to follow through with the answer.

**Never say anything “off the record.” Any statements or comments made to a reporter can be quoted.**



## References

- Editors. (2021). COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic. New Zealand Science Review, 77(1-2), 19. <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzsr.v77i1-2.7752>*
- On-Campus Performance Venues | Yale Undergraduate Production. (2023). Up.yalecollege.yale.edu. <https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/art-spaces/on-campus-performance-venues>*
- Stay Connected to Yale University. (2015, August 18). Yale University. <https://www.yale.edu/social-media>*
- The University of British Columbia. (n.d.). Media Training Takeaways. Retrieved October 9, 2023, from [https://news.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Media-Training-Takeaways\\_FINAL.pdf](https://news.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Media-Training-Takeaways_FINAL.pdf)*
- University Relations / Enrollment Management | Guidelines/Tips for Operations in a Crisis. (2022, August 30). Universityrelations.wvu.edu. <https://universityrelations.wvu.edu/culture/resources-for-communicators/crisis-communications-plan/tips-for-operations-in-crisis>*
- Wigley, S. (2023). Crisis Communication: Anticipate. Navigate. Mitigate.*

