



Managing the Unthinkable: Crisis Preparation and Response for Campus Leaders

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“The editors of this volume have assembled an important and comprehensive array of case studies that provide practical and useful information for leaders as they prepare and deal with crises. The authors have shared from personal experience thoughtful insights and helpful recommendations covering many significant aspects of crisis management. In the chapters of this volume you will find compelling and heartfelt first-hand accounts of the importance of presidential leadership in a crisis, how to build an effective crisis leadership team, how to deal with the media and develop a sound communications strategy as well as how campuses can move forward with recovery and healing even after the most devastating events. In short, this edited volume is a primer on how to prepare your campus for a crisis”—John G. Peters, President Emeritus, Northern Illinois University

Crises are no strangers on campuses — whether the deaths of students, severe weather events, athletic wrongdoing, crime, or student or employee malfeasance. How leaders respond can save lives, strengthen the institution, and comfort the community — or compromise reputations and result in scandal.

Risk management and readiness are not often at the top of the list of what presidents and their boards must do, but in a time of ongoing change, instantaneous communication, and media scrutiny, they risk their jobs and their institutional reputation if they do not heed the messages conveyed in this book.

Gretchen Bataille and Diana Cordova, with extensive and varied experiences that include a university presidency, directing senior leadership programs, and counseling presidents and senior administrators faced with critical campus events – together with 22 presidents, seasoned leaders in higher education, and media experts – provide forthright, firsthand advice on preparing for and managing a crisis, as well on handling the emotional, and often long-term, toll that can result from dramatic events on campus.

Through the examples of those who have successfully managed crises, this book provides expert insights and guidance on preparedness, assigning roles and responsibilities, and planning for contingencies ahead of time so that, in the moment, when there is pressure for immediate response that will be scrutinized by the media, by the public, and by the local constituencies, leaders can act with confidence.

For senior leaders and board members not in the throes of managing a crisis, this book outlines what needs to be done to be prepared and offers extensive resources for further reading.

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