



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY EST. 1826

Crisis Communications Presentation  
Ohio Security Summit  
August 1, 2007



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Incident Overview  
Friday, May 9, 2003  
Last Day of Final Exams

# Incident Overview: Friday, May 9, 2003

**4:01 p.m.**

Former student Biswanath Halder approaches the northwest door of Case Western Reserve University's Peter B. Lewis Building, near the heart of campus in University Circle. Halder attempts to open the locked door, then breaks the glass pane with a hammer.

**4:01 p.m.**

An employee calls the campus security dispatcher and reports that a man with a gun had just broken through a window and was in the building.



## Incident Overview: Friday, May 9, 2003

### **4:02 p.m.**

Halder puts on a military helmet, pulls a semi-automatic weapon from his book bag and enters the building through the broken door. He walks through the main floor and encounters a small group of students. He fires his weapon, striking one student before his gun jams.

### **4:02 p.m.**

As the dispatcher begins to transmit the call from the employee, a campus security officer in the Peter B. Lewis Building calls on his radio that shots have been fired. University Circle and Cleveland police are called.

### **4:03 p.m.**

People begin to flee the building. Others who are unaware pass Halder, who tries to fire his weapon, but it jams again. Halder heads to the building's lower level.

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**4:04 p.m.**

Campus security officers arrive and confer with the building administrator, who had escorted people from inside the building to an area across the street. Officers deploy to building exits to assist those leaving the building and to prevent others from entering.

**4:06 p.m.**

University Circle Police units arrive and confer with campus security officers



## Incident Overview: Friday, May 9, 2003

### **4:07 p.m.**

Two University Circle Police officers enter the building through the main entrance. As the officers enter, Halder returns to the main floor. Halder sees the officers and fires at them. Officers retreat to the cover of the entrance and exchange gunfire with Halder.

It is believed that Halder is wounded in the shoulder during this exchange.

### **4:07 p.m.**

Campus security dispatch, University Circle Police and the Cleveland 911 center receive numerous calls from people trapped inside the building who report gunfire.

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**4:07 p.m.**

Halder retreats to the second floor via the center stairwell, escaping the officers' fire.

Building cameras capture portions of the incident that occurred outside the building and on the first floor. Cameras do not cover the upper floors.



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### **4:08 p.m.**

Multiple Cleveland Police units arrive. They, along with University Circle and campus security officers, expand the perimeter and evacuate nearby buildings.

As the Cleveland SWAT team is mobilized, building plans are retrieved.

### **4:30 p.m.**

Cleveland SWAT enters the building through the main entrance. Shortly after they enter, Halder fires at them.

SWAT teams from the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office, the City of South Euclid and the FBI are called for assistance.

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## **4:30 p.m.–11 p.m.**

Working from the Cleveland Police mobile command unit, agencies plan a coordinated response. Officers secure stairwells, then move room to room to rescue occupants. Those who need medical attention are evacuated; others are moved to safety in the secured lower level.



## **11 p.m.**

Halder is captured on the fifth floor.

## Incident Overview: Friday, May 9, 2003

- One student is killed; another student and a faculty member receive minor injuries.
- The more than 90 occupants in the building are reunited with waiting family members.
- Nearly three years later, Halder is convicted on 196 counts in the incident and is sentenced to life in prison without parole.



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Communications Overview  
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# Communications Overview: Initial Notification

The University Marketing and Communications (UMC) Office was contacted shortly after 4 p.m. by campus security.

- A UMC media rep connected with the campus security director at the scene by cell
- Security director provided basic overview
  - No details on gunman, injured or those remaining in the building at that time
  - Building cordoned off; areas nearby had been evacuated
  - University Circle, Cleveland police, SWAT on the scene
- A UMC media rep immediately was dispatched to the scene to manage reporters on campus

# Communications Overview: Initial Messaging

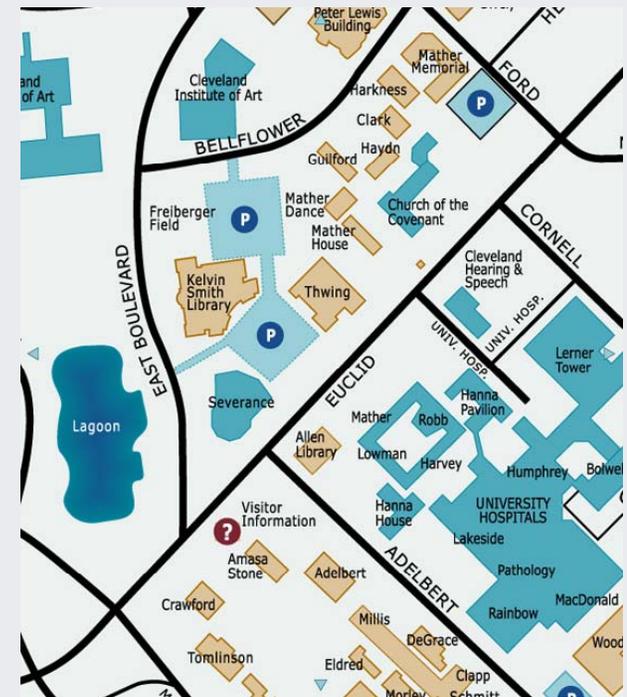
The timing of the incident, lack of details available at the onset and the fact that the incident immediately was contained to one building influenced the initial communications plan:

- Leadership and communications officers gathered in the main administrative building
- Initial messaging:
  - Provide basic overview of situation
  - Request that people do not come to campus
  - Request that those still on campus stay in their offices, residence hall, etc., and stay away from the Peter B. Lewis Building
  - Refer people to Web site for updates

# Communications Overview: Logistics

In addition to leadership gathering in Adelbert Hall the university provided separate space for constituents:

- The university president joined families of the injured at the hospital
- Those evacuated from the Peter B. Lewis Building and their families were taken to the Kelvin Smith Library where counselors were on hand and hospitality was available
- Faculty, staff, students and family gathered in Strosacker Auditorium, where counselors were available
- A media center was established in Hatch Auditorium



# Communications Overview: Unique Circumstances

The circumstances at the scene and access to technology created a unique situation:

- People still inside the Peter B. Lewis Building had access to e-mail, campus phones and cell phones
- Those inside the building began communicating details and different messages to various people, both on and off campus
- Different information began to circulate widely throughout on- and off-campus audiences and among media



# Communications Overview: Media Center

## On-campus Media Center:

- Hourly briefings provided to media and campus:
  - University President addressed the university's reaction, where to go for information and services available
  - Cleveland Mayor discussed the city's perspective on the event
  - Cleveland Police Chief provided updates on the incident
- Details from these briefings informed all messaging



# Communications Overview: Aftermath

Leadership, security and communicators met daily for weeks following the incident:

- Developed consistent messages and mapped out communications
- Prepared for daily media briefings with different spokespeople
- Planned campus memorial services
- Discussed recognition of the deceased student at upcoming commencement ceremonies
- Decided how to continue to memorialize the deceased student over the coming year(s)



# Communications Overview: Aftermath

Regular communications continued in the days that followed:

- Messages from the president sent to trustees deans, alumni, donors, etc., and all faculty, staff and students
- These messages were highlighted on the main university Web page and archived on the site
- Those who worked in the Peter B. Lewis Building and/or attended the Weatherhead School of Management received messages with details on their specific situations



# Communications Overview: Aftermath

Regular communications to all audiences continued in the days that followed:

- Campus security conducted open campus forums on safety and provided appropriate response to media requests
- Students and parents continued to get individual attention from student affairs, including housing and residence life staff
- All faculty, staff and students were encouraged to take advantage of university health and counseling services



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# Opportunities for Enhanced Communications

# Enhanced Procedures

Opportunities to enhance crisis communications procedures:

- Integrated crisis communications plan with university's emergency response plan
- Set up policy and logistics groups that include university communicators
- Conduct simulated campus-wide crises exercises regularly
- Launch a "light" version of the Web site to avoid stress on server

# Enhanced Infrastructure

Opportunities to enhance infrastructure for crisis communications:

- Make dedicated phone lines available to avoid circuit overload
- Stock a mobile media center
- Set up official, regular means of internal communications so constituents automatically know where to go for accurate, up-to-date information
  - Case Daily e-mail newsletter
  - Briefing Notes for leadership
  - Web homepage announcements

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**CASE DAILY**  
July 02, 2007

Case Daily Home  
Campus News  
Case in the News  
Higher Ed News  
Events  
For Faculty & Staff  
For Students  
Personnel  
Accolades  
About Case Daily  
Atom feed  
Case Daily Archives  
FAQs  
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Submit an item for inclusion in Case Daily

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Case News  
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Receive an email every time CASE DAILY is updated.  
Email:   
Submit

**President Snyder Renews Pledge to Communicate Regularly with Campus**

**Dear Campus Community,**

Today begins my first day in office as your president. I want to offer my sincere gratitude to all of you for your support, kind thoughts and generous welcome to campus.

I am privileged to once again serve at Case Western Reserve University, and I look forward to the exciting and important work that lies ahead of us. **The senior leadership team and I will diligently apply ourselves to ensure that our university continues on its mission of dynamic teaching, renowned scholarship and world-changing research.** We will work conscientiously to preserve our rich traditions and provide the important infrastructure for an academic environment that fully supports our students, faculty and staff. At the same time, we will engage all members of the university community in the process of developing and executing a plan with measurable results to enhance the academic stature of Case Western Reserve University. We will do this together. I will rely on the academic leadership including Interim Provost Jerry Goldberg, our deans and members of the faculty throughout this process to realize our potential as one of the nation's top urban research universities.

I want to thank Dr. Eastwood for his distinguished service as interim president. I look forward to working with Greg, not only as the director of the Inamori Center, but as a trusted adviser. I also will continue his pledge to our campus community to provide open and frequent communication on important aspects of the university.

Over the next several weeks I will be visiting our schools and units across campus. **I look forward to meeting all of you and invite and encourage us to be involved members of our university community, to work together to solve problems, to stimulate ideas and to contribute to our society.**

Sincerely,  
**Barbara R. Snyder**  
President  
Case Western Reserve University

**Case in the News**

**New president takes helm Monday at Case**  
*The Plain Dealer*, July 1, 2007  
Article provides an introduction of **Barbara R. Snyder, Case Western Reserve University's** new president.

**Public college pay is highest**  
*The Plain Dealer*, July 2, 2007  
With few exceptions, full professors at state universities make tens of thousands of dollars more a year, on average, than their counterparts at private colleges, according to a national study by the American Association of University Professors. **Case Western Reserve University** and Oberlin College are among the exceptions.

**Letters to the Editor: July 2, 2007**  
*Crain's Cleveland Business*, July 2, 2007 (subscription required)  
**Paul Giannelli**, Weatherhead Professor of Law, and **Markus Apelis**, a 2008 law degree candidate, write letters in support of **Case Western Reserve University School of Law Dean Gary Simson**.

# Enhanced Communications Plan

Opportunities to enhance the crisis communications plan:

- Review and revise communications plan every year
- Use new/current incidents and best practices to inform changes
- Continue to align communications plan with university's emergency response plan
- Train new administrators and staff members on the plan as part of orientation
- Add new technologies to the plan as they become available



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# University Crisis Communications Plan

# Crisis Communications Plan: Overview

## Overview:

- Define emergency response and communications teams and functions (policy vs. logistics)
- Create communications incident classifications that mirror emergency response plan
- Plan communications procedures for each classification
- Specify audiences and communications vehicles
- Specify staff responsibilities and identify and train backups in case of absences
- Identify and prepare appropriate spokespeople
- Identify media relations protocol (cold calls, news conference, media on campus, etc.)

# Crisis Communications Plan: Overview

- Provide media log template for calls/contacts
- Provide template of communications schedule
  - Identify main messages
  - Plan communications by audience
  - Time communications
  - Specify communication vehicles
  - Name person from whom the message will come
  - Name person responsible for creation/distribution
- Include closure procedures
- Include emergency numbers and phone trees
- Include city/county/state emergency response plans if appropriate

# Crisis Communications Plan: Overview

- Include appendices and additional resources as needed:
  - Building schematics
  - Campus evacuation plans
  - Privacy laws
  - Occupational and environmental safety department information
  - Homeland security
  
- Create special sub-plans as needed
  - Flu and emerging infections
  - Radiation and other hazardous chemicals
  - Power failure
  - Inclement weather
  - Natural disasters
  - Bioterrorism

# Crisis Communications Plan: Overview

New recommendations currently under review:

- Develop and utilize multi-layered, redundant system for rapid notification and communications to include:
  - InformaCast using the VOIP infrastructure for public address capability
  - SMS text messaging protocol to send out mass alerts to subscribers
  - Voice-over capability for current fire alarm system
  - Retrofit outdoor campus phones for use as public address system
- Commit resources to further development and implementation of a database of university-based volunteers, fluent in foreign languages, to provide translation services during emergency situations



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For more information on Case Western Reserve  
University crisis communications:

- Call University Marketing and Communications  
at 216-368-4440
- E-mail [case-news@case.edu](mailto:case-news@case.edu)