

The Prairie State College President will continue to communicate regularly with on-campus stakeholders (students, administrators, managers, faculty, and staff) through various platforms, including email, PSC Announcements, PSC Alert (emergency broadcast system), and the college newsletter.

It is worth noting that the president is often asked to speak on issues directly concerning the College, current local and national matters and other miscellaneous topics. The voice of the institution's leadership is a powerful tool. It is used during positive times like announcing noteworthy accomplishments and exciting developments and used to touch on challenging issues that can stir up emotion and strike an uncomfortable chord like layoffs, the dismissal of an employee, and unfortunate current national and world events. The president's influential voice is needed on specific topics, and the president will determine when it is appropriate to release a statement.

The following protocols have been established to manage the expectation that the president responds personally to a broad range of issues – even those that do not directly relate to or impact the Prairie State College community. Please note that the overuse of the president's voice can undermine the influence and importance of the message in times when it is especially needed and warranted and create an expectation that the president “should” respond to every situation, thereby de-emphasizing the importance of his message.

The following are examples of some, but not all, of the situations that may merit a statement directly from the president:

1. Crises directly affecting the College Campus and its constituents:

The Prairie State College Emergency Operations Plan guides with processes and procedures for emergencies on campus, including crimes, weather-related events, and major disruptions to operations. PSC Alerts are typically the first communication, with a direct follow-up message from the president to provide updates and share additional critical information and emotional support, when warranted, during response and recovery. At times, a message from a member of the President's Cabinet (or dean, director, or manager) who oversees the area most closely connected to the situation is more appropriate. A decision as to when and how to send messages or statements from the president is advised through the emergency management/crisis incident response structure.

2. National and World Events:

Matters that affect or are explicitly related to the College's core mission of teaching and scholarship or where significant national or world events have occurred (i.e., the Sept. 11 attack, the COVID-19 pandemic, racial and social unrest, mass school shootings.)

3. Strategic Priorities:

Matters related specifically to our institution and the president's strategic priorities (e.g., strategic plan, budget concerns, updates, and upcoming developments.)

4. A tragedy that directly impacts individuals or groups in the College community.

Consideration should always be given to whether other college administrators can and should serve as primary messengers. This applies especially when a situation involves a specific audience in the college community, and the area vice president or dean is the most informed source of information. For example, in academic matters or faculty situations, the vice president of academic affairs will likely serve as a messenger. On issues specific to the student body, the vice president of student affairs or a dean of students may serve as a messenger. It is expected that administrators, and senior leaders, in particular, will share plans and draft communications before messages are sent to broad constituencies (i.e., college community, students, faculty, etc.).

In any situation when members of our community may be anxious or affected, we expect that a representative from Student Affairs will reach out directly to students to make sure that they have the support they need; we expect the same response from Human Resources when faculty and staff members are directly impacted. Events or other gatherings to demonstrate support and concern, and to share perspectives are supported and encouraged. These events often will be organized at the local level and organically by the college or student groups. However, there may be instances when an all-college gathering is warranted and appropriate (e.g., 9/11). Vice presidents and department/program heads may wish to share communication with their respective communities; the Dean, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences with the liberal arts students and faculty; and coaches to share with a particular athletic team. Any such communication is permitted under this protocol; a copy should be shared with the executive director of marketing and communications as an FYI to disseminate to the cabinet and other campus leaders.

5. Media responses or interviews.

The president is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with the news media and will be available to discuss important matters or situations (e.g., strategic planning, broad presidential priorities, presidential decisions directly related to the student experience, news features pertaining to presidential leadership, significant initiatives and decisions, etc.) upon request.

To provide the most helpful and timely information, the president will often refer a question to another campus leader or expert most closely associated with the topic. To

best determine whether the president should comment or is available to comment, or if a reporter is unsure who the best contact may be, the reporter should contact the Office of Marketing and Communications, specifically Ms. Jeri Bingham, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications at jabingham@prairiestate.edu.

No official statement should be submitted to the media or otherwise regarding college matters that have not been first approved by the president's office or the executive director of marketing and communications.

When other voices are appropriate:

It is crucial for other leaders throughout campus, all of whom are essential members of the president's team, to be represented when a supportive, caring, or unifying voice is necessary. The following are situations or circumstances when the president will defer to other campus leaders.

- When a preliminary message is needed in advance of an essential presidential communication.
- Media requests that are more appropriate for topic experts or departmental leaders.
- When a PSC employee, faculty member, student, or alum is involved in a national incident or suspected of wrongdoing, the president and cabinet will determine when (and if) a message will be sent. Note: PSC will respect due process and the privacy of the individuals involved.
- Reporters should contact the campus expert most closely associated with the story topic; if there is uncertainty about who should be contacted or an immediate response is required, they should contact the Office of Marketing and Communications, specifically Ms. Jeri Bingham, executive director of marketing and communications at jabingham@prairiestate.edu.

Channels of Presidential Communication

Multiple communication channels are used for sharing presidential messages, statements, and other responses. Not all platforms will be necessary for every message.

- Email is reserved for instances when a message must reach every member of a stakeholder community. In contrast, social media may disseminate a message further or for the president to share personal thoughts, observations, recognitions, or good news about PSC.
- College-wide email (or video in specific circumstances) directly from the president. These messages are posted on the college intranet for internal (PSC employees) audiences only.

- A statement issued through the Office of Marketing and Communications on behalf of the president.
- News releases on the College webpage.
- Other channels managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications, such as the PSC newsletter, This Week at PSC, PSC Announcements, and PSC Alert.
- Messages posted to the president's webpage (primary messages will be archived on the president's page for ongoing reference).
- Twitter posts from the president's personal Twitter feed @pscpresident and College social feeds Twitter: @prairiestatecol; Facebook: /prairiestatecollege; Instagram: @prairiestatecollege; and LinkedIn.

It is crucial that the PSC president is informed of the thoughts and concerns of the college community, including its students, faculty, staff, and district residents. Suggestions, comments, and feedback are always welcome at pscpresident@prairiestate.edu.

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