

A VALUES-AFFIRMATION MODEL  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CRISIS COMMUNICATION

BY

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## DEDICATION

These eighty-one pages are dedicated to the memory of the college students whose personal tragedies I have dissected here, which have, in some small way, become a part of my own narrative.

May their stories not be forgotten, and may their deaths both challenge and strengthen our institutions of higher education.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IHE: Institution of higher education

SDC: Student-driven crisis

UVa: The University of Virginia

## ABSTRACT

In May 2010, one of the most memorable higher education crises of the decade erupted, six blocks from the campus of the University of Virginia (UVa), when fourth-year student and women's lacrosse player Yeardley Love was found dead in her off-campus apartment. Hours later, her ex-boyfriend and fellow UVa lacrosse player George Hugely V was arrested and charged with first-degree murder. This incident—the high-profile murder of one student by another—and the immense media attention and public scrutiny that it garnered, required the University of Virginia to engage in crisis communication, to respond to a chaotic situation in the hopes of restoring order and regaining legitimacy through the use of appropriate discourse. Although a university is required to craft and deliver a public response to crisis situations, its spectrum of rhetorical strategies is often much narrower than that of a corporation experiencing a comparable crisis. Therefore, the project theorizes that during a student-driven crisis, effective crisis discourse focuses on addressing the values with which the public is most concerned and speaking in a direct and meaningful way about the issues that contributed to the crisis. This shift away from image repair and toward values-affirmation is expressed in the rhetorical tradition as a change in genre, a move away from *apologia* toward *epideixis*.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A phone rings in the Office of Public Affairs, confirming that the early morning rumors are true. One student is dead, another student has been arrested in connection with her death, and the local media outlets are already on campus. It is Monday, May 3, 2010, at the University of Virginia, and one of the most memorable higher education crises of the decade is about to begin.

The crisis at the heart of this project is the 2010 murder of University of Virginia fourth-year student and women's lacrosse starter Yeardeley Love, a case that has become commonly known as the "UVa lacrosse murder." Her death led to the arrest of her ex-boyfriend and fellow UVa lacrosse player George Hugueley V, who was charged with first-degree murder<sup>1</sup> and convicted of second-degree murder in Charlottesville on February, 23 2012. Due to the unusual circumstances surrounding the crime, Love's death and Hugueley's arrest and trial generated an immense amount of attention from a number of audiences. This incident—the murder of a student, apparently by a fellow student—and the public scrutiny that it garnered, required the University of Virginia to engage in crisis communication, to respond to a chaotic situation in the hope of restoring order through the use of appropriate discourse.

### *Rationale*

Despite the stark reality that crises do indeed occur on college campuses, there has been almost no attention paid to higher education crisis communication in existing communication scholarship. That is, there is scarce crisis communication research that

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<sup>1</sup> Hugueley was also charged with felony murder (murder in the commission of a robbery), robbery, burglary, grand larceny, and breaking and entering. He was convicted of second-degree murder and grand larceny.

investigates and comments upon the distinctive challenges and obstacles of a university facing a crisis<sup>2</sup>. Another major gap in the crisis communication literature is the lack of attention to the process by which an incident develops into a crisis.

Though this project foregrounds the concept of genre as fitting response, it rejects an understanding of genre as merely a uni-dimensional discursive prescription. Rather, this project acknowledges the power of language choices to shape perception and, in turn, social reality. However, as Hearit and Courtright (2003) note, most crisis research to date complicates rather than illuminates “the dynamics of crisis communication *qua* communication (*i.e.*, the structural process of triggering events, crises and their aftermath as *symbolically developing phenomena*) (p. 86, emphasis added). Presuming that they can be identified, the “how” and “why” of crises matter; the cause of the loss of an organization’s legitimacy is relevant for the creation of fitting discourse and, in turn, the resolution of the crisis. Therefore, this project also investigates the way in which a crisis is “co-constructed” through the use of language, taking on shape and significance in the interplay between public scrutiny and organizational response.

As economic pressures and technological advances continue to raise questions regarding the relevance of the traditional college classroom, the very existence of institutions of higher education is dependent upon their ability to maintain legitimacy, that is, to summon and keep public support (see Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). In a February 2012 interview with the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Clayton M. Christensen, a professor of business administration at the Harvard Business School,

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<sup>2</sup> One exception to this dearth of research is John Fortunato’s (2008) work on the Duke lacrosse case, which appeared in *Public Relations Review*: “Restoring a reputation: The Duke University lacrosse scandal.”

expressed this concern about the relevance of traditional higher education models: “Higher education once was immune, he said, until the spread of online learning, which will allow lower-cost providers to extend into the higher reaches of the marketplace. ‘Higher education,’ [Christensen] said, ‘is vulnerable to disruption’” (Berret, 2012).

When scandals erupt in the corporate sphere, they can be (and usually are) attributed to personal or corporate greed, lack of transparency, disregard for relevant regulations, ineffective internal governance etc. Crises that occur in institutions of higher education, however, are generally perceived by the public as emblematic of broader social problems and ethical failures. Most higher education crises are always also cultural crises that call into question our society’s ability to produce an educated and ethical citizenry. This is especially true at elite institutions, at those schools that purport to train the best and brightest of our citizens.

#### *Defining student-driven crisis*

This project is particularly interested in the discourse that is produced by an institution of higher education (IHE) in response to a student-driven crisis (SDC). A student-driven crisis is a serious incident (involving injury, criminality, or death) caused by the actions and choices of one or more college students, to which an institution of higher education must publicly respond. There are three key elements. Student action or inaction must be at the heart of the incident for it to be rightly considered ‘student-driven.’ The situation must require the college or university to speak publicly to one or more audiences; their discourse is public, subject to interpretation, scrutiny, and counterargument. Finally, since this project focuses on crisis communication strategies, it defines student-driven crisis in terms of the rhetorical situation—an imperfection that

calls upon the use of language for its resolution (Bitzer, 1968). Crises involving students generate particularly intense scrutiny regarding “the method of operation and output as well as . . . the goals or domain of activity” (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; p. 126) of American higher education. The discourse used to frame and resolve these crises is therefore particularly worthy of study.

Student-driven crisis is arguably the most complex and sensitive rhetorical situation that institutions of higher education could face. No other type of crisis is more emotionally charged or more difficult for an institution or the public to comprehend and resolve. Even when university negligence plays a contributing role, facility and environmental crises are perceived to be external to the human condition (see Zdziarski, *et al.*, 2007, for a full description of these types of campus crises). Those crises do not prompt the sort of moral and philosophical inquiry that originate in instances of “man’s inhumanity to man” (Burns, 1784). Moreover, the violence or suffering inflicted in a student-driven crisis cannot be located as outside the community, as in cases where students are the victims but not the aggressors (*e.g.*, the serial murders of five students at the University of Florida in 1990). Even when corrective action is used to respond to student-driven crisis, neither university administrations nor student bodies can ignore the fact that they are dealing with their own demons. Simply put, communication in the wake of student-driven crisis represents higher education crisis rhetoric at either its most eloquent and competent or its most inadequate; when a college student has been injured, violated, or murdered, there is very little space between rhetorical competence and rhetorical failure.

### *Methodology overview*

In order to explicate the issues and strategies central to successful higher education crisis communication, this study employs a two-part methodology. In the first part, I model the process by which incidents involving students develop into crises that require a public response from a college or university. I offer additional examples of recent student-driven crises in order to demonstrate the public issues and values at stake in incidents involving students. Next, I reconstruct and review the crisis communication strategies used by the University of Virginia following Yeardley Love's murder and George Huguely's arrest in May of 2010. In order to analyze UVa's public response to the crisis, I draw on official statements, press releases, and coverage of the crisis by major media outlets. In this analysis, I pay special attention to moments in which the response of UVa could have been strengthened by the inclusion of positive, values-based language. Finally, I draw on current crisis communication scholarship and epideictic theory to outline a values-affirmation model for higher education crisis rhetoric.

### *Theoretical framework*

Both the method and the conclusions of this project are framed and informed by theories of crisis communication and rhetorical genre. Contemporary crisis communication scholarship offers a broad, comprehensive view of the issues and obstacles encountered by an organization facing a crisis. This theory therefore provides a set of general principles for successful crisis communication in today's technological and cultural landscape. Within this body of literature, organizational *apologia* theory in particular offers a set of strategies for use in cases where an organization must respond to accusations of wrongdoing.

However, neither crisis communication theory nor organizational *apologia* theory adequately addresses issues specific to an institution of higher education facing a crisis, particularly a student-driven crisis. To frame the particular rhetorical issues that colleges and universities face during crisis communication, I return to the roots of rhetorical genre theory, foregrounding the theory of epideictic discourse. Unlike corporate organizations, colleges and universities are not always directly accused of wrongdoing, especially in cases of student-driven crisis. Nevertheless, institutions of higher education (IHEs) often face more intense and prolonged public scrutiny in crisis situations, due to the greater social responsibility attributed to their organizational mission. Epideictic theory thus offers an alternative orientation to crisis communication that can be used to productively respond to public concerns when an IHE has not been accused directly of wrongdoing.

Drawing on this theoretical framework, I argue that the crisis communication of institutions of higher education is weakest when it relies solely on strategies of self-defense. In contrast, effective higher education crisis communication requires the affirmation of common public values as a way to bolster organizational legitimacy in troubled times. Both a crisis event itself and its management by the IHE in question are capable of bringing the American higher education system as a whole to the forefront of public discourse. Inappropriate response, lack of preparation, conflicting messages—all these forms of rhetorical failure have the power to shake the public's trust in institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is especially in times of crisis that an institution of higher education would find it necessary to make wise and careful rhetorical choices.

### *Chapter outline*

I continue this introductory chapter by providing a brief cultural context for contemporary American institutions of higher education (IHEs), as well as offering a justification for my use of the crisis at the University of Virginia as an exemplar of IHE crisis communication broadly. In the second chapter, I begin with a review of the relevant literature on organizational legitimacy and crisis communication, with particular attention to developments in corporate *apologia* theory, and I introduce organizational epideictic theory as a framework for addressing the public values central to higher education crises. In the third chapter, I focus on student-driven crisis as a distinctive rhetorical situation. I review the process by which incidents develop into crises, offering relevant examples of recent crises on college campuses. In the fourth chapter, I analyze the rhetorical choices and strategies of IHEs in times of crisis, using the official communication of the University of Virginia as a primary artifact. In the concluding chapter, I present a typology of values-affirmation strategies; this model offers an approach to crisis communication that focuses on rebuilding public and stakeholder relationships rather than protesting organizational ignorance or innocence. I also offer notes on the limitations of this project, recommendations for higher education-specific communication strategies, and final thoughts on the necessity for competent and ethical crisis discourse.

*American higher education in context*

Institutions of higher education occupy a unique middle ground in contemporary American society. They are, in fact, more easily defined by what they are not than by what they are. They are neither for-profit ventures nor charitable organizations<sup>3</sup>. Though many universities are private institutions, all claim to promote the public good that is an educated citizenry. Given the recent economic downturn, many educational institutions seem increasingly focused on their “brand” and their bottom lines, seeking to promote their reputations and maintain academic quality while attempting to manage costs, often by slashing less popular academic departments or athletic programs. Today, colleges and universities compete fiercely with their peer institutions for quality students, top professors, public funding, private donations and positive rankings—to name a few of the most prized commodities (Altbach, 2010). Yet these same institutions also tout their service to the community, their ground-breaking research, their support of the arts, and even their commitment to organ donation (Collins, 2011). Even the “core technology” (Weick, 1976) of the modern university resists precise definition, characterized as it is by the interdependent functions of research, teaching, and athletics (Sperber, 2000).

Moreover, most American colleges and universities—especially those that participate in NCAA Division I athletics—have a uniquely large and diverse array of stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, fans, private benefactors, public officials, parents of students, and members of the local community (especially

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<sup>3</sup> According to the United States Internal Revenue Code, American institutions of higher education are classified as 501(c)3 organizations, meaning that they are non-profit, tax-exempt associations. However, colleges and universities share this designation with organizations as diverse as the American Catholic Church, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Salvation Army. Thus, this label does little to identify the exact cultural role of American colleges and universities.

neighbors of the university). Research universities, particularly those associated with a local medical center, are often major employers within their communities, as well as the recipients of extensive state and federal funding. Today, colleges and universities may be known for their professors, coaches, doctors, researchers, counselors, and board members. Most importantly, institutions of higher education are culturally-revered repositories of human knowledge, *loci* of human expertise.

If one is to define a university by its multiplicity of goals, its commitment to the public good, and its array of interest groups—where does that definition leave its students? The authors of *Academically Adrift*, a recent sociological analysis of the intellectual value of American higher education, suggest that student wellbeing may be the last thing on some institutional agendas:

While colleges and universities have always in part been businesses that have competed to attract students and cater to their individual needs, they also have traditionally seen themselves as enterprises with quasi-parental authority and the responsibility to define appropriate education goals with regards to academic contents, social behavior, and moral development. The balance between these competing institutional functions has noticeably shifted in recent decades. (Arum and Roksa, 2011, p. 17)

This shift, perhaps, can be characterized as one in which university decision-makers pay less attention to their individual (and collective) students' social lives, moral choices, and intellectual development—and more to their institution's research, reputation, and landscaping.

As Arum and Roksa (2011) point out: “Although institutional barriers and inequalities in access persist and concerns about affordability continue to mount, American higher education today educates more than eighteen million students in more than 4,300 degree-granting institutions” (p. 33). Combine this unprecedented enlargement in student populations with the waning of traditional *in loco parentis* policies, and the result is that more students find themselves in a position to inflict harm upon themselves or others.

Another significant trend described by Arum and Roksa (2011) is the “non-academic professionalization of higher education” (p. 12). The result is a marked expansion of non-faculty support staff positions on college campuses, including the emergence of offices of College Relations, Public Affairs, and Communications, to name a few of the most common department titles. When crisis breaks on campus, it falls to individuals in these offices to design rhetorical messages that assuage community fears, temper public ire, and forestall media curiosity (Klein, 2007).

*Rhetorical artifact: crisis communication at University of Virginia*

This project’s choice of artifact is informed by Burke’s (1969a) discussion of the representative anecdote in *A Grammar of Motives*: “A given calculus must be supple and complex enough to be representative of the subject matter it is designed to calculate. It must have scope. Yet it must also possess simplicity, in that it is broadly a reduction of the subject matter” (p. 60). As a distinctive rhetorical situation, I believe that a student-driven crisis serves as a microcosm of the policy concerns and communication strategies of contemporary institutions of higher education. Within this context, I argue that the

“UVa lacrosse murder” is representative of both the most common and the most complex issues seen in higher education crisis communication.

First, the “UVa lacrosse murder” provoked the same set of basic challenges that organizations face during and after a crisis. Competing communication orientations, particularly the presence of liability concerns that simultaneously oppose the need for communicative transparency, are a common obstacle to ethical crisis communication (Hoger and Swem, 2000). The presence of diverse groups of stakeholders is also a predictable issue in crisis communication; almost all organizations are required to design messages for multiple audiences, as well as to prioritize among these groups (Benoit, 1997). Also, the intense pressure that local, regional, and even national media outlets exert on an institution to comment on a crisis—and the public scrutiny that such media coverage may result in—is an issue that almost all IHEs face during crisis communication.

In addition, Love’s death is not a totally unique incident, nor is it the most violent or most bizarre event to occur on an American university campus in recent years. The Virginia Tech massacre in April 2007, which left 33 dead and 25 wounded, is the deadliest on-campus event in United States history. Perhaps the most disturbing individual student murder in recent memory is the September 2009 rape and murder of Yale University doctoral student Annie Le, whose mangled body was found inside a wall in her laboratory building (Korn & Needham, 2009). In March 2011, less than a year after Love’s death, Middle Tennessee State University basketball player Tina Stewart was stabbed to death by her roommate in an off-campus apartment (Mandell, 2011). Despite the circumstantial similarities to Love’s death—both were female athletes

murdered in their own off-campus apartments mere days before major athletic tournaments—Stewart’s murder received comparatively little attention from either the press or the public. Given this context, the process by which one college student’s untimely death becomes a national news cover story and another does not is clearly of interest to communication scholars.

The “UVa lacrosse murder” is a particularly valuable artifact in that it allows for a discussion of the process by which organizational crises are co-constructed, by tracing the way in which they develop over time, in the interplay between organizational response and public reaction. Knowledge of this process is crucial to successful crisis communication practice. Moreover, the intense public scrutiny that UVa sustained, from Love’s death all the way through Huguely’s trial, highlights the importance of crisis communication in garnering public support for an institution, in both the short and the long term. The University of Virginia, as one of the eight original Public Ivies, is nationally recognized for its excellence in academics and the competitive nature of its athletic programs. However, a student-driven crisis such as “the UVa lacrosse murder” casts a shadow over the legitimacy of the University of Virginia as a whole. Love’s murder and Huguely’s arrest effectively cast doubt on UVa’s ability to safeguard and educate its students. Moreover, the stakes are higher for elite IHEs; there are higher standards for correct institutional response, and these organizations have more to lose in terms of funding, prestige, and public opinion.

Most importantly, one of the imperatives of crisis communication practice is to anesthetize negative press as quickly as possible. In a piece on university and media relations, Alana Klein of *University Business* magazine dictates, “Don’t lose control of

the story. A good way to judge whether you communicate effectively is how quickly you can knock the story off the front page of a paper. The Duke scandal, for example, made the front page of various papers for nine weeks straight” (Klein, 2007). Similarly, it is clear that the University of Virginia was unable to control the story of Love’s death and Hugueuly’s arrest. On April 26, 2012, a Lexis-Nexis® *Academic* database search using the keywords “Yearley Love” returned 971 results<sup>4</sup>, with the most recent dated April 24, 2012. During pre-trial proceedings, the judge presiding over Hugueuly’s trial commented that knowledge of Love’s death cannot be used to disqualify potential jurors “because anybody who hasn’t heard about the case isn’t alive at this point” (qtd. in Strong, 2011). Therefore, this case raises the question of whether better (or simply different) crisis communication on the part of UVa could have prevented Yearley Love’s name from becoming a gruesome pop culture reference.

Perhaps most importantly, the examination of this case paves the way for a discussion of what criteria can or should be used to determine effectiveness in higher education crisis communication efforts. Is the goal, as Klein states, to “knock the story off the front page of a paper”? Is effective crisis communication concerned merely with preventing legal action and damage to an institution’s reputation? Or, is an organization’s crisis communication effective when it restores legitimacy by affirming public values and rebuilding stakeholder relationships? In the next chapter, this project considers each of these perspectives by reviewing the literature of organizational

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<sup>4</sup> This search was performed on “All News” with the Duplicate Options set to “On – High Similarity.” To contextualize the results of the search, several others searches were performed at the same time with identical settings. “Tiger Woods” returned 980 results; “LeBron James” returned 985 results; and “Tina Stewart’ MTSU” returned 80 results.

legitimacy theory, crisis communication theory, corporate *apologia* theory, and organizational epideictic theory.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Introduction: Defining organizational crisis*

Sociologist David Friedrichs (1980) defines crisis as “a turning point, often brought about by a convergence of events which create new circumstances, threatening established goals and requiring action; it is further characterized by pressures, tensions and uncertainties” (p. 540). Applying this definition to an organizational setting, Pearson and Clair (1998) add that crisis is “a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly” (qtd. in Massey, 2001, p. 160). Most recently, Ulmer, *et al.* (2011) describe an organizational crisis as an unexpected, atypical event that represents a significant threat to the goals of the organization, creating uncertainty and requiring a short response time (p. 7).

As Hearit and Courtright (2003) note, organizational crises are “above all communicative creations” (p. 80) that take on shape and meaning through the interplay between organizational activity and public response. In this paradigm, “the reality of a crisis is socially constructed through language, a process whereby meaning is created and agreed upon” (Hearit & Courtright, 2003, p. 86). In line with these definitions, this project argues that organizational crises are the result of a socio-rhetorical process in which organizational actions (or omissions) are recognized and described by the public as incompatible with social values. As Sellnow, Ulmer, and Snider (1998) explain: “A crisis is likely to occur if an organization violates a deeply-established social norm or value regardless of whether the organization has technically broken a law. In short, an organization's need to identify its goals and actions with those that are valued by the

larger social system is often intensified by crisis situations” (p. 62). Thus, a serious incident that is perceived as evidence of an organization’s lack of congruence with public values is likely to develop into a crisis.

### *Organizational legitimacy theory*

In some of the most prominent early research on organizational legitimacy, Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) define legitimacy as value-congruence between an organization and its environment. Their discussion of legitimacy is focused on social values, on the importance of similarity between organizational norms and the values of the society in which it exists. According to Dowling and Pfeffer, “Insofar as these two value systems are congruent we can speak of organizational legitimacy. When an actual or potential disparity exists between the two value systems, there will exist a threat to organizational legitimacy” (p. 122). Thus, legitimacy is a dynamic quality that can be gained, lost, and regained, since the enactment of social values is often fluid. The result, as Dowling and Pfeffer demonstrate, is that the most legitimate organizations are generally the most nimble, sensitive, and most responsive to their environments.

In this model, the three determinants of organizational legitimacy are method of operations, goals, and output (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). In addition, Friedrichs (1980) notes that, depending upon the political and managerial climates of the organization and its environment, “large-scale communications systems may ultimately provide extraordinary opportunities for establishing and cementing legitimacy” (Footnote 24, p. 547). If one applies this model to the activity of crisis communication, there are also three determinants of legitimate communication: method of communication, communication goals, and output (the message itself).

Similarly, Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) discuss legitimacy as an organizational resource, suggesting that the quest for legitimacy often complicates organizational life. They argue that the most problematic aspect of legitimation attempts surfaces when an organization encounters a situation where it must offer protestations of legitimacy. The very demonstration or communication of legitimacy may be an indication of friction between an organization and its environment, however minor (p. 186). Their research focuses on those “dynamics which often undermine legitimation attempts” (p. 177). Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) divide legitimation efforts into two categories, symbolic and substantive, and suggest that these efforts take place in several contexts, depending on whether the organization is seeking to extend, maintain, or defend its legitimacy. Most importantly, Ashforth and Gibbs propose a view of organizational legitimation efforts as interactive and therefore dependent upon the organization’s ability to engage its constituents.

Suchman (1995) attempts the ambitious task of creating a comprehensive synthesis of earlier literature on organizational legitimacy, suggesting that previous research oversimplifies the topic and fails to adequately define it. Suchman particularly argues for the existence of “two distinct rhetorics of legitimacy,” focusing on the interplay between strategic and institutional view of legitimation efforts (p. 573). His article defines strategic approaches (as described by Dowling and Pfeffer) as managerial strategies, while institutional approaches to legitimacy deal mainly with the cultural and systemic pressures exerted on an organization. Like Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), Suchman points out that there are multiple stages within the quest for legitimacy, suggesting that this is not a static process and that gaining, maintaining, and regaining

legitimacy may in fact be a cyclical process. In doing so, Suchman calls attention to the complexity and richness of legitimacy theories as a toolkit for deepening the understanding of organizational behavior.

Massey (2001) echoes Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) by emphasizing legitimacy as an expression of the positive relationship between an organization and society. He adds the idea that management of organizational legitimacy is a communicative, and thus dialogic, process that requires interaction between an organization and its constituents. In synthesizing the literature on organizational legitimacy and crisis communication, Massey rejects the transmission view of organizational communication in favor of the dialogic perspective, suggesting that legitimacy is only achieved and maintained when organizations actively engage society as a responsive audience. In this view, “crisis-response strategies are message repertoires that are designed to repair the organization's image by influencing stakeholder perceptions” (Massey, 2001, p. 158). Additionally, Massey’s empirical research study applies niche-width theory to legitimacy, finding that generalist organizations are perceived as more legitimate than specialist organizations.

Deephouse and Carter’s (2005) more recent empirical study examines the difference between the concepts of legitimacy and reputation. They reaffirm previous definitions of legitimacy as a function of the relationship between an organization and its environment (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Massey, 2001) and discuss reputation as a result of the comparison between parallel or analogous institutions. This view suggests that successful legitimacy management takes an institutional rather than strategic approach (Suchman, 1995) and implies that little can be done to improve an organization’s reputation without first establishing its legitimacy.

Although legitimacy is defined as a function of social acceptance and reputation is defined as a function of perceptions of organizational performance (resulting in judgments of esteem and prestige), for Deephouse and Carter, both constructs are a result of the evaluation of an organization by its stakeholders. The evaluation of reputation is often based on the quality and quantity of the system's inputs, while evaluations of legitimacy—the prerequisite for positive reputation—are rooted in assessments of congruence and appropriateness.

### *Crisis communication theory*

Research on crisis communication management and strategy appears within both public relations literature and organizational rhetoric scholarship. In an early piece of public relations research, Judith Ressler (1982) offers a range of both technical and strategic crisis communication advice, much of which has become standard and essential within the crisis public relations. In the “do’s and don’ts” portion of the article, Ressler explains the importance of accentuating good news, expressing gratitude and sympathy, accepting blame if necessary, maintaining transparency when possible, acknowledging uncertainty, respecting victim and family privacy, and correcting media inaccuracies. Though Ressler’s work is grounded in best practices rather than in theory building, her recommendations depict the way in which crisis communication serves as an intersection of rhetorical theory and communication praxis.

Birch (1994) echoes many of the communication principles offered by Ressler (1982). His additional comments reflect industry concerns created by the technological advances of the intervening twelve years. Birch importantly acknowledges the presence of competing communication orientations during a crisis, and he calls attention to the

recurring tension between public relations principles and a company's legal obligations/concerns. His research heavily emphasizes crisis planning, noting that crisis communication is now subject to increased urgency and expanded audiences, due to advances in mass communication technology and velocity. Birch also addresses one of the key paradoxes of crisis communication scholarship:

When they are hit by a crisis, many companies seem to follow the accepted rules of crisis communications, yet still come out of it badly in terms of public perception. This is why a continuing, "routine" corporate public relations program plays such a key role in insuring that the company is in a strong position before it finds itself with a crisis. If it is not, it is much harder to make classical crisis management techniques work. (p. 33).

This statement also highlights the difficulty of determining the criteria for successful crisis communication. Moreover, Birch's research offers a clear rationale for the incorporation of legitimacy theory in the study of crisis communication, since Birch's discussion of "strong position" essentially describes pre-crisis perceptions of legitimacy. Birch's work thus bolsters this project's assertion that the organization's communication must be perceived as legitimate in order for crisis management to have the desired effect.

When compared to Birch's piece, Benoit and Brinson's (1994) article of the same year illustrates the distinctive orientations toward crisis held by public relations practitioners and organizational rhetoric scholars. Benoit and Brinson (1994) utilize a theoretical framework rooted in Benoit's classic scholarship on image restoration discourse to analyze AT&T's corporate responses to the crisis caused by a long distance

service interruption in 1991. Image restoration theory is used widely within organizational communication scholarship as a frame for analyzing post-crisis communication; it expands on Ware and Linkugel's (1973) classic self-defense postures to propose six potential image repair strategies, each with multiple variants (see also Benoit and Lindsey, [1987], and Benoit, Cullifor, and Panici, [1991]). Image restoration theory and organizational legitimacy theory, however, are neither mutually exclusive nor competing frameworks. As Benoit and Brinson (1994) note, "There can be no doubt that government agencies, corporations, and other bodies are as concerned as individuals with their image or reputation, and for good reason. Since the early 1970s, organizations have become more aware of their responsibility for contributing to society in economic, social, environmental, and political ways" (p. 76).

Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt (1996) suggest a shift in the classical crisis communication model; they argue for the inclusion of an issues-management approach that would proactively analyze an organization's external environment to identify seeds of crisis as soon as they begin to sprout. They also argue that crisis communication should be supplemented by a symmetrical, ongoing public relations strategy that seeks "to build and nurture positive relationships with all publics before an issue erupts" (p. 85). Although Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt (1996) do not address organizational legitimacy and epideictic discourse, their research finds it imperative that communication strategies throughout the crisis life cycle demonstrate awareness of public values. Most importantly, they argue for the same communication posture that is fundamental to organizational epideictic, asserting that public interest takes precedent over organizational interests in a crisis situation.

Most recently, Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger's (2011) book *Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity* represents a useful intersection of public relations practice and communication scholarship. This piece is especially unique in its optimistic argument that crisis represents an opportunity for organizational growth and learning. Also, Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2011) consistently emphasize the importance of ethical crisis communication: "One of the key factors of a crisis is that it reveals the ethical values of the organization. Crises do not build character; they expose the character of the organization" (p. 19). The authors also warn of the lasting negative impact that ineffective, garbled, or unethical communication may have on stakeholder relationships, even after the crisis has been resolved, and suggest that the most successful crisis communicators are those who focus on finding solutions rather than repairing reputations (see Table 13.2, p. 223).

### *Corporate apologia theory*

Corporate *apologia* theory often serves as the rhetorical underpinning for the substantive (non-technical) aspect of crisis communication and thus developments within the two bodies of scholarship have tended to parallel each other (see Seeger, et al, 2001). In its earliest stages, *apologia* theory focused on the need for an individual to publicly defend himself against charges of wrongdoing; its application to organizations is a relatively recent development. Hearit (1995) in particular sees a clear connection between organizational legitimacy theory and *apologia* theory: "A corporate *apologia* is a public response to a social legitimacy crisis, a response that seeks to distance

institutional actors from their wrongdoing and reaffirm adherence to key social values" (p. 1).

In a landmark piece of *apologia* research, Ware and Linkugel (1979) assert, "We believe that apologetical discourses constitute a distinct *form* of public address, a family of speeches with sufficient elements in common so as to warrant legitimately generic status" (p. 273, emphasis in original). They go on to outline four "factors" generally seen in apologetic speech: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence, yet they point out that "classification alone lacks an evaluative dimension" and cannot be considered criticism in and of itself (1979, p. 283). In addition, Ware and Linkugel (1979) classify apologetic strategies as either reformatory or transformative; in the first case, the speaker is "limited . . . by the reality the audience already perceives" (p. 277), but in the second situation, the speaker may defend himself by transforming the meaning the audience attaches to the event (p. 278). As a piece of traditional rhetorical criticism, this essay examines only the apologetic speeches of individuals accused of wrongdoing, analyzing examples of public address that include Clarence Darrow's 1912 "They Tried to Get Me" speech, Edward Kennedy's 1969 "Chappaquiddick" speech, and Richard Nixon's 1952 "Checkers" address.

Ryan (1982) argues that in order to more productively study the genre of apologetic speech, it is necessary to reunite *apologia* with its counterpart *kategoria*, and to study the two as a "speech set" (p. 254). He indicates that the type of *apologia* is in fact dependent upon the nature of the *kategoria*, which is determined by the *staseis*, or issues, that are central to the debate. Thus, the rhetorical relationships within the speech set are determined, at least in part, by the actual relationships between the speakers or

organizations represented in the debate. Acknowledging the complexity of these relationships, Ryan incorporates rhetorical stasis theory (first articulated by Hermagoras and popularized by Cicero) as a way to clarify the rhetorical choices made in apologetic discourse. He notes that the issues selected may differ for apologists and accusers. Additionally, Ryan emphasizes the necessity of dividing accusations and apologies according to whether they deal with policy or character, echoing Ware and Linkugel's (1979) statement: "The questioning of a man's moral nature, motives, or reputation is qualitatively different from the challenging of his policies" (p. 274).

Marsh builds on Ryan's (1982) scholarship on the relationship between *kategoria* and *apologia*, which as a speech set is reflective of the real world positions of accuser and accused. Marsh (2006) argues that stasis theory fills in otherwise empty spaces in the interplay between *kategoria* and *apologia*, shedding light on the central themes of the crisis. Like Ryan (1982) before him, Marsh insists that the identification of *staseis* (issues) precedes the choice of rhetorical strategy. As "the invention phase of rhetoric" (Marsh, 2006, p. 42), *stasis* is noticeably akin to the *topos* of Greek rhetoric—the place from which one draws the content and evidence for an argument. The *staseis*, which are four in number, represent the contested territory of the problem at hand: fact (*stochasmos*), definition (*horos*), quality (*poiotes*), and jurisdiction (*metalepsis*). These four issues generate a series of questions that are used to give form and shape to the debate between accuser and accused: Did they do it? Was it unjust? To what extent can it be excused? Who has the right to pronounce judgment? (Marsh, 2006, p. 42). Importantly, Marsh (2006) also emphasizes the "hierarchical nature of the *staseis* of fact,

definition, and quality” (p. 43), explaining that the *stasis* of fact constitutes the strongest attack and the *stasis* of quality constitutes the weakest defense.

A major development in *apologia* theory can be seen in Dionisopoulos & Vibbert’s (1988) analysis of the 1979 public debate between CBS and Mobil Oil over the news network’s accusation that Mobil Oil’s reported earnings were the result of unethical accounting practices. Their work on this case study represents the first time that *apologia* theory, which previously viewed *apologia* solely as a speech of defense by an individual, was applied to the discourse of an organization. The logic of this move is defended by Hearit (2001), who explains: “When one considers that organizations are recognized before the law as juristic persons coupled with the fact that they seek to construct singularly distinct social personae, it follows that corporations are indeed capable of *apologia*” (p. 502).

In addition, Dionisopoulos & Vibbert’s (1988) work lays the groundwork for later research to examine organizational responses to accusations of wrongdoing in terms of an ongoing dialogue. Their analysis of the clash between CBS and Mobil moves beyond the simple study of accusation and response to include the role of counterattack in resolving public debate (see Hearit’s [1996] work on General Motors’ successful counterattack against *Dateline NBC* for another example of work in this tradition). Dionisopoulos & Vibbert (1988) particularly emphasize the role of “corporation-as-actor” and successfully demonstrate the discursive potential of the “social persona of organizations,” especially when the organization as a whole is criticized (p. 248). In the case of Mobil, the correct selection of issues allowed the company to craft a persuasive apologetic discourse in

which the organization identified itself with the public and encouraged the public to identify with it as well (Dionisopoulos & Vibbert, 1988).

Two of the contemporary subsets of apologia research are image restoration theory (Benoit, 1997) and image maintenance theory (Rowland and Jerome, 2004). Building on Dionisopoulos & Vibbert's (1988) application of apologia theory to organizational discourse, Benoit (1997) indicates, "The basic options are the same for both individual and corporate image repair efforts" (p. 177). Benoit's work emphasizes perception, audience, and strategy. He explains that perceived guilt, responsibility, and offensiveness are damaging and require a response even if the organization is innocent of wrongdoing. He also notes that organizational actions have multiple audiences, and that although it is necessary to prioritize among these groups, the best image repair efforts will acknowledge and include as many audiences as possible.

Finally, as Benoit (1997) points out, image restoration theory "is more exhaustive than the earlier theories (*apologia*, accounts) on which it builds. This theory offers five broad categories of image repair strategies, some with variants, that respond to such threats" (p. 178). Following an explication of the strategies, including variants, contemporary examples, and assessments of success or failure, Benoit (1997) offers "recommendations for utilizing these strategies" in the event of an organizational crisis (p. 182). He recommends planning for and anticipating types of possible crisis, understanding the exact nature of the perceptions of the crisis once it strikes, and acknowledging and prioritizing organizational audiences (p. 182), all of which have become commonplaces in contemporary crisis communication research.

Hearit (2001) “details the substantive conventions that inhere in” contemporary corporate *apologia* theory and practice (p. 501). This extensive review is helpful, due to the way in which the strategies, factors, and subgenres of *apologia*—both individual and corporate—are scattered throughout the communication literature. Hearit (2001) tackles the definitional problem of what type of speech constitutes *apologia*, outlines the contexts in which apologetic discourse may be needed, and delineates (with examples) the strategies available to the corporate apologist. Briefly discussing the legal implications of corporate *apologia*, Hearit (2001) notes that organizations are often faced with a complicated set of choices: “Do they apologize and violate their legal responsibility to their shareholders, or do they not apologize and risk alienation of key publics and consumer groups?” (p. 509).

Seeking to address this dilemma, Rowland and Jerome (2004) assert the primacy of the image maintenance function of organizational *apologia*, in contrast to Benoit’s focus on image repair. They ground this argument on the principle of universality:

Organizations always seek to maintain their image when they are accused of wrongdoing. They do not, however, always seek to repair the image in a particular case, either because specifics of the situation make such repair very difficult (they really did it) or because using repair strategies such as denial could be counterproductive to the image of the organization.

(Rowland and Jerome, 2004, p. 196)

However, some scholars argue that image maintenance cannot rightly be described as *apologia*, which “requires the purification of one’s reputation as the primary motive for responding” (Hearit, 2001, p. 502).

In a significant theoretical turn, Hearit's (1995) research "re-conceptualize[s] the situation that warrants corporate *apologia* from a charge against an individual's moral nature to a social legitimacy crisis" (p. 2). Hearit treats corporate *apologia* as a "discourse of re-legitimation" (p. 6), and introduces the parallel concept of organizational epideictic as a powerful rhetorical strategy that works "to rebuild social legitimacy, for in the praise of that which is esteemed, the rhetor is complimented for positive judgment" (Hearit, 1995, p. 11). Hearit argues that the self-defense strategies seen in *apologia* theory and image restoration discourse are only one element of post-crisis communication. In order to effectively resolve a crisis, organizations must also demonstrate their renewed commitment to the social values that "they are reputed to have transgressed" (Hearit, 1995, p. 11). Values-based discourse in the wake of a crisis has been studied, sporadically, as a form of organizational epideictic (see Bostdorff and Vibbert, 1994; Stahley and Boyd, 2006; Traynor, 2006).

### *Epideictic theory*

In one of the first pieces to argue for an expansion of the role of epideictic speech, Oravec (1976) analyzes the possible meanings of *theoria*—which Aristotle describes as the *telos* of *epideixis*—and asserts that this "observation" also includes faculties of comprehension and judgment. The end of *epideixis* is not merely "observation" in the sense of viewership, and audiences of epideictic rhetoric are not like modern audiences in a movie theater, passively watching a scene as it unfolds. Oravec disagrees with the perspective that epideictic only "concerns topics which are unimportant for producing choice or action" (1976, p. 162). Rather, she emphasizes the Burkean definition of *epideixis* as "a form of social ritual or public education which reinforces common values

within a culture” (p. 163). This expansion of the scope of epideictic rhetoric helps ground the idea that *apologia* may not be the only rhetorical genre useful for crisis discourse, though it is the one that has traditionally been studied.

Oravec's piece is one of the earliest to suggest a role for epideictic rhetoric outside the sphere of spectacle and entertainment, yet she is hardly the only rhetorical scholar to suggest that *epideixis* is more than the genre of eulogy and commemoration. Hauser (1999) argues that Aristotle viewed epideictic rhetoric as central to the definition and inculcation of public morality. Like Oravec before him, Hauser recognizes that an audience attending to epideictic discourse is required to exercise prudence and discernment. The difference is, as Hauser (1999) explains, "Unlike deliberative and forensic speeches, which require an audience to sit in judgment on concrete and problematic cases, epideictic does not address a problematic situation requiring a decision. It displays honorable deeds and asks its audience to witness what appears before it" (p. 15). Audiences of epideictic discourse, then, are not asked to cast a ballot but to make a judgment regarding the accuracy or truth of the scene presented to them. They are members, not of a traditional judicial assembly, but of the court of public opinion.

Given the diversity and fragmentation of post-modern societies, however, some critics have raised the question of whether epideictic rhetoric still has a role in contemporary society (Sullivan, 1993). Emphasizing the stark contrast between the ancient Greek *polis* and the world of today, Sullivan (1993) asks if epideictic discourse, "which once functioned to uphold a monolithic culture," is still meaningful today (p. 339). The answer, for Sullivan, is that the political and communal use of epideictic rhetoric has shifted toward a business and institutional role. *Epideixis* is no longer the

genre of national epics and funeral orations; it now belongs to the realm of alumni magazines and corporate newsletters.

Based on this shift, Sullivan (1993) proposes a broader definition of epideictic rhetoric: "It is rhetoric concerned with celebrating the cultural ideal rather than with determining the disposition of a particular case. From the perspective of those inside the culture, epideictic produces consensus, or orthodoxy" (p. 339). However, such orthodoxy is produced by means of argument and evidence—often argument by example, as in classical forms of epideictic speech—so that epideictic discourse can also be understood as a less explicit form of persuasive communication.

#### *Epideixis as crisis communication strategy*

Epideictic rhetoric can be used by institutions to create consensus and solidarity in bad times as well as good. Emphasizing places of congruence between the values of an organization and the public can be a particularly powerful rhetorical strategy when an institution encounters criticism. As Sullivan (1993) concludes, "People still use epideictic rhetoric, but they now use it to create, maintain, and celebrate orthodoxies, their own subcultures within a larger pluralistic society" (p. 340). For Hauser as for Aristotle, successful epideictic rhetoric emphasizes the connection between the values of the rhetor and the values of the audience and, in doing so, strengthens the community as a whole. For this reason, Hauser upholds the potential of epideictic rhetoric as "a new, less volatile means for managing the irrational eruptions that seem always to threaten public life" (Hauser, 1999, p. 17).

Audiences of epideictic speech are required to either accept or reject the paradigm presented by the speaker, to determine for themselves whether such persons and actions

are worthy of the praise or blame assigned to them by the speaker. In an instance of organizational crisis, both the form and the content of discourse must be perceived as legitimate, that is, congruent with public values, in order for it to effectively resolve the rupture between an organization and the broader society. In the same way, the rhetor who engages in epideictic discourse must present a worldview that is consistent with the values of his or her audience if the audience is to accept it.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE PROCESS OF CRISIS DEVELOPMENT

### *Introduction*

The literature on organizational communication brims with analyses of the rhetorical choices of institutions that have experienced various forms of crisis. Attention has been paid to crisis planning, stages of crisis management, and even post-crisis recovery. However, most crisis communication research to date takes a retrospective, case study approach that focuses on the success or failure of an organization's communication strategies during and after a specific crisis event. Amid the multiplicity of crisis definitions and case studies, there seems to be very little understanding of why some incidents become crises and others do not, or why the public is more offended by certain crises than by others. To justify the need for an understanding of this process, I begin with an overview of relevant instances of student misconduct to illustrate the variety of serious events that can occur on a contemporary college campus.

### *Examples of student misconduct*

In December 2006, transfer student Laura Dickinson was found dead in her residence hall room at Eastern Michigan University. The news release sent to the university community stated that no foul play had occurred; not even Dickinson's parents were informed that state and campus police suspected that their daughter's death was a homicide. The truth did not emerge until February 2007, when EMU student Orange Amir Taylor III was arrested and charged with Dickinson's rape and murder (Huffstutter, 2007). Once the details of the incident became public, EMU became the subject of intense stakeholder and media scrutiny; then-President John Fallon was dismissed and United States Department of Education opened an investigation into the university's

handling of the case. In 2008, the Department of Education fined Eastern Michigan University \$350,000 for its role in covering up the cause of Dickinson's death and for its failure to alert students of the potential safety hazard on its campus (Lipka, 2008).

In February 2010, Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, gained national media attention due to the alarming increase of student suicides on its campus. University officials were forced to comment upon Cornell's branding as a "suicide school" and to detail their plans for corrective action (Epstein, 2010). These student deaths resulted in increased public scrutiny of student health and counseling services. In addition, the father of a Cornell student who committed suicide on February 17, 2010 announced his intention to sue the University, alleging "gross negligence" in Cornell's failure to erect safety barriers on the bridge from which his son jumped (Linhorst, 2011).

In March 2010, an off-campus Pledge Night celebration sponsored by the Greek organizations of Wake Forest University resulted in the hospitalization of six students for alcohol poisoning. The incident required the mobilization of half of Forsyth County's ambulance fleet and was declared to be a public safety hazard by police and public health officials, who closed the event (O'Donnell, 2010). The event received brief attention from local, regional, and national media outlets, including *The Huffington Post*, but was framed as an exemplar of the systemic problem of alcohol abuse on college campuses, and so the story disappeared quickly.

In September 2010, Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University, committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge "after his roommate [Dharun Ravi] secretly filmed him during a 'sexual encounter' in his dorm room and posted it live on the Internet" (Friedman, 2010). Both Clementi's death and Ravi's subsequent trial

made national headlines, casting doubt on the quality of Rutgers' housing policies and on its commitment to welcoming and protecting LGBTQ students on campus. Clementi's roommate Dharun Ravi was charged with invasion of privacy and bias intimidation, as was the student whose room he used to video-stream Clementi; in March 2012, Ravi was convicted on 29 counts (DeMarco, 2012).

In May 2011, Tina Stewart, a women's basketball player at Middle Tennessee State University, was stabbed to death in her off-campus apartment by her roommate and fellow MTSU student Shanterrica Madden. The university president released a statement expressing condolences, and the murder was covered by a number of national news outlets, due to the team's top seed in the upcoming NCAA Division I Sun Belt Conference's postseason tournament (Mandell, 2011). The incident, though tragic, was never described as a crisis by university officials or media personnel, and Madden's ongoing murder trial has received only basic local media attention.

In November 2011, Robert Champion, a drum major in Florida A&M University's band (a hallmark of one of the nation's premier historically black colleges) died suddenly in a parking lot outside the band's bus following the annual Florida Classic football game versus Bethune-Cookman University. His death was attributed to hazing by fellow band members and resulted in the dismissal of the band's director and the expulsion of four students (Olorunnipa, 2011). In February 2012, Champion's parents filed a lawsuit against the charter bus company and the driver of the bus on which their son was hazed (Campbell, 2012). The incident gained sustained coverage in national media outlets and brought the effectiveness of the university's anti-hazing policies under direct scrutiny.

*Seeds of crisis: Public perception and social legitimacy*

These six instances of serious student misconduct demonstrate the broad spectrum of incidents and topics to which institutions of higher education must be prepared to publicly respond. In surveying the realm of student misconduct, however, it becomes evident that there are recurring patterns and common themes. Why is it, then, that some incidents erupt into crises and some simply fade into the background? Why did a single suicide at Rutgers University make national headlines, while it took six student deaths at Cornell University to draw public attention? Why did MTSU student-athlete Tina Stewart's murder receive minimal coverage, while UVa student-athlete Yeardeley Love's death resulted in a *People* magazine cover story? Both Robert Champion's death and Wake Forest's Pledge Night fiasco center on the practice of hazing in collegiate student organizations; why did one story produce protracted outrage while the other was quickly normalized? In its investigation of these questions, this chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach. Maintaining the view that crises are "above all communicative creations" (Hearit and Courtright, 2003, p. 80), I draw on moral psychology and legitimacy theory in order to model a process of crisis development that explicates the co-constructed nature of student-driven crisis (SDC).

In a piece on crisis communication that appeared in *University Business*, Tim Caboni, assistant dean for external relations at Vanderbilt University, suggests: "If it's not going to kill the university or damage its business, it's not really a crisis" (qtd. in Klein, 2007). However, Benoit (1997) adds: "Perceptions are more important than reality. The important point is not whether the business in fact is responsible for the offensive act, but whether the firm is thought to be responsible for it by the

relevant audience. . . . As long as the audience thinks the firm at fault, the image is at risk” (p. 178). In considering attributions of guilt, responsibility, ignorance, and malice, it becomes clear that responsibility for an incident is most often shared between the IHE and some other individual actor (in these cases, a student). The designation of responsibility is determined, not only by the facts of the case, but especially by perception of the incident by the public: “Responsibility can appear in many guises: for example, a business can be blamed for acts that it performed, ordered, encouraged, facilitated, or permitted to occur (or for acts of omission or poorly performed acts that it appears responsible for)” (Benoit, 1997, p.178).

Therefore, I theorize that incidents of student misconduct are likely to develop into crises if the stakeholders of an IHE perceive that the incident represents a violation of social values. If the public takes the incident as evidence that the IHE’s value system is incongruent with the values of the broader society, the IHE will experience a crisis of social legitimacy. No matter how serious the facts of the incident, it cannot rightly be called an organizational crisis until and unless the public perceives that major social values have been violated by the institution.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Five social values*

To answer the question of why some serious incidents become crises of public legitimacy, I turn to the scholarship of psychologists Haidt and Graham (2007) on the foundations of social morality. Describing the value of “harm/care” as the primary foundation of morality, Haidt and Graham (2007) explain: “Because people have a

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<sup>5</sup> By “institution” here, I refer to the IHE and its institutional actors, including students. Later in this chapter, I discuss the ability of an organization to “segment a part of its identity;” however, the premise here is that the organization’s identity functionally includes organizational actors.

sensitivity to cruelty and harm (analogous to the negative sensations caused by taste buds for bitterness), they feel approval toward those who prevent or relieve harm, and this approval is culturally codified in virtues such as kindness and compassion, and also in corresponding vices such as cruelty and aggression” (p. 104). In a student-driven crisis, the value that IHEs are most commonly perceived to have failed to uphold is the harm/care value. Other categories of social values that IHEs and/or institutional actors may be accused of violating are fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity.

Specifically, the harm/care value is characterized by compassion/identification and the desire to prevent/relieve suffering, or conversely, to inflict punishment on someone who has harmed another. The fairness/reciprocity value is rooted in a belief in reciprocal altruism, or in gratitude. It may be expressed in the belief that “if I help him, he will help me,” or the idea that “I should not hurt him because he has not hurt someone.” The in-group/loyalty value is rooted in alliance formation and in the principles of trust and cooperation. It is generally based in a desire to defend a member of an alliance, or in suspicion of an unknown person. The value of authority/respect foundation are based on perception of a person’s place in a social hierarchy (relative to others), usually his/her skills, reputation, or appearance. The purity/sanctity value comes into play in response to the experience of disgust, especially in the presence of physical unattractiveness, disease, and socially unacceptable physical/sexual activity (*e.g.*, incest or pedophilia) (Haidt and Graham, 2007). Transgressions against these values occur more infrequently, yet if they coincide with a disregard for the value of harm/care the public may interpret them as particularly egregious.

### *Seven public issues*

In this paradigm, values refer to prescriptions for action: “how one should act. . .” However, public values are not enacted in a vacuum. Therefore, I use the term “issues” to describe the context(s) in which values are practiced. They form the second half of the directive for action: “. . . with regard to.” I theorize that even if only one public value is violated, but violated with regard to multiple public issues, the incident will appear to the public as multiple transgressions. With each additional value that is violated, with regard to each additional issue, the “surface area” of an incident increases exponentially, with implications for stakeholder scrutiny and media attention. Based on my review of numerous higher education incidents, there are seven recurring issues in student-driven crisis broadly. They are: race, gender, class, sexuality, sport, technology, and casualty.

<b>Seven Public Issues</b>		
issue	description	exemplar
race	The issue of race generally results in a commentary upon correct/incorrect race relations. Incidents of student misconduct that involve racial transgressions may be visually represented without overt comment, so that the races of major actors can be seen and thus speak for themselves without explicit interpretation.	Duke University, 2006
gender	Gender becomes an issue when an incident involves sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape victim advocacy, etc. These incidents often result in “hero” and “villain” or “aggressor” and “prey” characterizations, since gender differences are culturally associated with power differentials.	University of Virginia, 2010
class	The issue of class (alternatively, elitism or entitlement) generally comes into play when the instance of student misconduct occurs at institutions of higher education perceived to be elite, and especially when the student(s) involved is a member of an elite organization or program	Cornell University, 2010
sexuality	As public issues, sexuality and gender are distinct from each other. Sexuality may be an issue in incidents where gender is not ( <i>e.g.</i> , the 2011 Penn State child abuse scandal). Sexuality as a form of sensationalism tends to attract attention, since it instinctively arouses human curiosity.	Eastern Michigan University, 2006
sport	Instances of student misconduct in which sport is an issue are exponentially more likely to gain public attention. In some cases, affiliation with an athletic program may be the only reason that a student’s misconduct gains public interest.	Middle Tennessee State University, 2011
technology	As technology continues to advance, first-world humans are predictably angered by its malfunction and fascinated by its novelty. Given this cultural attentiveness to technology, student misconduct that involves technological failure or misuse—is specifically likely to attract public attention.	Rutgers University, 2010
casualty	There have been instances of student misconduct in which the number of casualties created becomes a pressing public issue. In certain cases, the issue at stake is the institution’s [in]ability to prevent such casualties in the future. Casualty is connected to class, because there are times when the body count need only be “one” of a class in order to arouse public interest.	Virginia Tech, 2007

Broadly, the most significant determinant of sustained public attention to an instance of student misconduct is the number of issues that can be used to attach meaning to the event. In order to illustrate the way in which values and issues interact in process of crisis development, I present two detailed examples of higher education crisis.

*Lehigh University, 1986*

On April 5, 1986, Jeanne Clery, a nineteen-year-old college freshman at Lehigh University<sup>6</sup>, was raped, mutilated, and murdered in her dorm room by a fellow student, Joseph M. Henry. During the 1987 murder trial of Clery's attacker, Clery's parents learned that Henry had gained entry to their daughter's room through a series of propped residence hall doors. This fact foregrounded Lehigh's lax campus security as a contributing factor in Jeanne Clery's violent death. Following Henry's conviction, the Clery family sued Lehigh for \$25 million and settled out of court for an undisclosed amount (Gross and Fine, 1990). They used the money to found a non-profit organization and lobby for the passage of legislation that requires IHEs to both record and release relevant information regarding crime and security on campus. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. More than twenty-five years later, the Clery Act remains America's most significant piece of legislation with regard to student-driven crisis.

On the front page of its website, Lehigh University describes itself as a selective, highly ranked research university. The contrast between Lehigh's glowing description of itself and the horrific murder that took place in one of its residence halls is a central theme in public scrutiny of student-driven crisis broadly. The recurring question is

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<sup>6</sup> Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

always, "How could something this horrible happen here, in a place this scholarly, prestigious, beautiful, etc.?" Cast in terms of public values and social issues, the question becomes, "How could an institution of higher education (and its students) fail to uphold the values that we hold in common as a society, with regards to this issue?"

In the case of Lehigh University, the question asked by the public was, "How could Lehigh fail to uphold the principle of harm/care with regard to gender and technology?" The university failed to protect its student(s) adequately, had failed to protect a female student specifically, and had failed in the area of campus security enforcement.<sup>7</sup> A secondary question in this crisis was, "How could a Lehigh student fail to uphold the principle of purity/sanctity with regard to sexuality and race?" Clery was a blonde, white woman who was sexually brutalized by a black man. As is the case in many student-driven crises, the actions of Henry were conflated with the inaction of Lehigh. In the end, institution and student were both perceived to have acted in a manner incongruent with public values; Lehigh's financial settlement with the Clerys and Henry's conviction and death-penalty sentence are evidence of this incongruence. However, it is important to note here that Clery's murder became a public crisis because of the role that Lehigh's negligence played in contributing to the death of one of its students.

*Duke University, 2006*

Twenty years after Clery's murder, the American public was again reminded that even the most elite institutions of higher education are not exempt from outbreaks of violence, misogyny, and racial tension. In March 2006, members of the Duke

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<sup>7</sup> It was later revealed that in the three years before Clery's murder, Lehigh had experienced 38 violent crimes on campus, at a rate higher than the much larger Penn State University.

University<sup>8</sup> men's lacrosse team were accused of sexually assaulting Crystal Mangum, an African-American exotic dancer who had been hired to perform at a team party off-campus. Between April 18 and May 15, three team members, all white, were formally indicted on charges of first-degree forcible rape, first-degree sexual offense, and kidnapping (see Fortunato, 2008, for a more detailed discussion of this specific case).

The Duke lacrosse case has three elements that make it particularly complicated to understand from the perspective of public values. First, the Duke lacrosse case displays the added complexity associated with examining student-driven crises that involve college athletics programs. Student-athletes are members of an in-group within an in-group, making the social value of in-group/loyalty particularly salient to crises involving them. In fact, the principle of ingroup/loyalty can be violated in two different ways. In the first, members of the same group fail to exhibit the loyalty to each other that is required by group membership. In the second, group members exhibit too much allegiance to each other; that is, they are loyal at the cost of other, more significant social principles.<sup>9</sup>

Second, Duke University's position on the case changed dramatically part-way through the crisis, and all charges were eventually dropped in the case. As a result, the Duke lacrosse case offers a clear example of a conflict that is ultimately resolved in the court of public opinion rather than in the judicial assembly. In addition, Duke's shift in

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<sup>8</sup> Durham, North Carolina.

<sup>9</sup> Haidt and Graham's (2007) discussion of moral foundations depicts social values as possessing an implicit hierarchy. Therefore, when two value sets seem to be in conflict with each other, the principle that is more socially significant will win out. For example, if the value of care seems to conflict with the value of purity, the value of care should be prioritized.

rhetorical strategy demonstrates the way in which public values are capable of exerting influence upon an organization even while the crisis is ongoing.

Finally, public response to the incident made it clear that the institution and its actors had violated major social principles. In an article published on April 3, 2006, *ESPN* writer Greg Garber noted, “The intersection of so many hot-button issues—race, class, gender, alleged sexual abuse—has ignited the passions of many typically disenfranchised groups. For a week now, the charged atmosphere on the campus here at Duke has been like a radical postcard from the late 1960s. There have been demonstrations nearly every day, and student groups have pressed the cautious administration for answers and action.” However, Duke University and members of its lacrosse team, although publicly castigated, were not condemned for the same actions and choices. In cases of student-driven crisis, institutions and their actors (usually students) are generally conjoined and therefore require active rhetorical disassociation. In the Duke lacrosse case, however, Duke University and its lacrosse players were perceived as separate entities who had each transgressed in distinct ways.

Based on the public values and issues at stake in this crisis, I believe that public scrutiny of this case can be summarized by three core questions: How could Duke University lacrosse players violate the principle of harm/care with regard to gender, sexuality, and race? How could Duke University violate the principles of harm/care and authority/respect with regards to class and race? How could Duke University violate the principle of in-group/loyalty with regard to sport (*i.e.*, its men’s lacrosse team)? Summarizing his views on the Duke lacrosse case, Durham Mayor William Bell stated: “The president [of Duke University, Richard Brodhead] understands the seriousness of

this issue and he understands the implications, not just for Duke but for the City of Durham itself. We all agreed that right now these are allegations, that we need to let it work its way through the legal process. At the same time, there are moral and ethical issues we need to look at” (qtd. in Garber, 2006).

### *Challenges in higher education crisis communication*

In an article on crisis communication management, Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt (1996) issue this directive: “The organization must talk from the viewpoint of the public interest, not of the company's” (p. 86). To craft an adequate response to a student-driven crisis, an institution of higher education must first seek to understand how an incident is perceived by the public. In other words, IHEs must be able to identify the public values that are most essential to their own legitimacy. Values and issues may differ from incident to incident and from institution to institution, but their identification is paramount, because salient public values frame the interpretation of the crisis, thereby controlling the direction and magnitude of response. The question of how institutions of higher education respond has been divorced from the question of how the public responds; throughout this project, however, I argue that this divide can and should be remedied, not least through wise and careful language choices in time of crisis. Nevertheless, colleges and universities face distinctive challenges and obstacles throughout the crisis communication process. These constraints can be grouped into three specific categories: the higher education relationship to public values, the student/IHE relationship, and the potential for implicit accusation.

Serving as repositories of intellectual expertise, athletic prowess, and cutting-edge research, institutions of higher education are, in many ways, barometers of public values.

It is a commonplace in contemporary media theory that “the media do not tell us what to think, only what to think about” (see Shaw, 1979 on agenda-setting theory and mass communication). In contrast, institutions of higher education do indeed tell the public what to think in regard to health practices, investment strategies, geo-political affairs, and media violence, to name a few spheres of research. The research findings and ideological values of the higher education industry have a direct and profound impact upon American public policy. Therefore, it is especially devastating when the actions or inaction of IHEs appear to violate the very public values they help to form.

Institutions of higher education are one of the few organizational categories whose most significant stakeholder relationship is not defined in terms of a financial transaction such as salary, share-holding, or benefaction. As a result, the relationship between a university and its students results in a more complex bond of identification than the bond between an organization and its employees, stockholders, or donors. Students cannot be “fired” by an IHE; they can, of course, be suspended or expelled for misconduct. However, simply expelling a misbehaving student does little to reassure the public of the university’s social legitimacy. As Sellnow, Ulmer, and Snider (1998) point out, “Routine solutions, such as blaming and firing responsible individuals, may salvage an organization's reputation, but they do little to avert fears that similar crises will occur in the future” (p. 63). Historically, in fact, IHEs have tended to protect misbehaving students from outside scrutiny rather than exposing them to the harsher penalties of external judicial systems.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Regarding sexual assault cases in particular, IHEs have been harshly criticized by for their predilection to deal with student offenses more mildly than federal legislation requires, especially if the offense in question occurred off-campus (see Grasgreen, 2011, for an overview of this issue).

Analyzing an organizational crisis experienced by Domino's Pizza in the early 1990s after the traffic-related deaths of a number of their delivery drivers, Hearit (1995) explains one of the ways in which the relationship between an organization and its actors can be rhetorically manipulated: "In most situations Domino's drivers are equated with the company itself; the distinctiveness of the identity only gets attention when it serves a useful rhetorical purpose, such as creating a potential scapegoat. As a result, a corporation, unlike an individual rhetor, can label a part of its identity 'rogue' and, in the process, mitigate its guilt by scapegoating its employees" (p. 8). Similarly, in most situations students are equated with the college or university they attend. However, it is decidedly less convincing when an IHE seeks to evade perceptions of responsibility by labeling one or more of its students "rogue." This difference between corporations and IHEs may be due in part to the fact that the bond of identification between students and their educational institutions transcends graduation and even expulsion; one's *alma mater* ("nourishing mother," in the original Latin) becomes a permanent part of one's academic and professional pedigree in a way that one's previous employers do not.

As discussed in the introduction to this project, institutions of higher education occupy a space in American society that is different from the position held by corporate organizations. In contrast to the profit motive that characterizes the daily operations of American corporations, IHEs have traditionally been perceived as serving a higher ideal—promoting the public good that is education. When crises or scandals emerge in the corporate world, organizations tend to be quickly and directly reproached for their actions or omissions. However, when serious incidents surface in the realm of higher education, the public may refrain from immediately passing judgment upon the school(s)

in question, or may be hesitant in attributing fault directly to a college or university. As a result, even in crises where the institutions' culpability appears clear, IHEs are not always directly accused of wrongdoing, despite public perception of shared responsibility for the incident. The absence of an explicit *kategoria* (see Ryan, 1982) necessarily shapes the communication strategies of a college or university dealing with a crisis; an implicit indictment requires a more complex rhetorical response than does a clear-cut accusation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CRISIS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, I analyze the crisis experienced by the University of Virginia (UVa) following the murder of Yeardley Love and the arrest of George Huguely V, focusing on the rhetorical choices of the university as a way to explicate the issues central to higher education crisis communication. I draw primarily on statements released by UVa, supplemented by comments made by University officials to media outlets and by major news articles and reputable editorials discussing the incident<sup>11</sup>.

I begin by reviewing the timeline of events and briefly describing the statements released by the University of Virginia following Love's death. The artifacts for this analysis date from May 3, 2010 to March 3, 2012, from the day of Love's death and Huguely's arrest, through Huguely's trial, and following his conviction on February 22, 2012. Of primary interest are the fourteen official statements from UVa, which can be grouped chronologically into three communication stages: ten statements made between May 3, 2010 and May 23, 2010, one statement made on May 3, 2011 on the one-year anniversary of Love's death, and four statements released between February 1, 2012 and February 23, 2012.

Following this overview, I return to organizational legitimacy theory to answer the question of whether Love's death and Huguely's arrest threatened the social legitimacy of UVa, and if so, in what ways that legitimacy was threatened. Next, I move to a detailed analysis of what was actually said by UVa in response to Love's death and

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<sup>11</sup> The most significant media outlets that covered this case were the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Roanoke Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *People Magazine*, *The Daily Progress* of Charlottesville, VA, *USA Today*, and the student newspaper of UVa, *The Daily Cavalier*.

Huguely's arrest, over the course of the twenty-two months between Love's death and Huguely's conviction. In this section I specifically address areas where I believe that UVa crisis communication could have been strengthened by the inclusion of values-affirmation rhetoric.

### *Defining the rhetorical situation*

First, however, it is necessary to define the rhetorical situation that UVa faced on Monday, May 3, 2010. Bitzer (1968) explains: "When I ask, What is a rhetorical situation?, I want to know the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse: How should they be described? What are their characteristics? Why and how do they result in the creation of rhetoric?" (p. 1). The context faced by the University of Virginia on May 3, 2010 was the murder of a student, apparently by another student, both of whom represented the university in an official capacity as members of the UVa lacrosse program. This situation is clearly a delicate and complex one: the University of Virginia must pay homage to the memory of a deceased student, offer practical support to affected members of its community, assure parents and other external stakeholders that there is no ongoing safety risk to students, acknowledge the arrest of a student without overtly presuming his guilt, and attempt to moderate the scrutiny of media outlets. Describing the situation at the University of Virginia in the aftermath of Yeardey Love's murder and George Huguely's arrest, *Sports Illustrated* journalist L. Jon Wertheim (2010) wrote: "Streets that had been lined only with azaleas and rhododendrons were choked with television satellite trucks. Every outlet from *ESPN* to *Inside Edition* had arrived in pastoral Virginia to report a heartbreaking story that blended sports, privilege, love and death."

In response to Bitzer's interest in how context gives rise to rhetoric, I suggest that the University of Virginia was required to persuade its stakeholders that it is a compassionate institution, takes student death seriously, possesses the resources to deal with grief, is capable of adequately protecting its students, and had no way of anticipating or preventing this particular incident. In particular, UVa was required to present a case that this incident is a deviation from the norms of student life and university culture, such that it would be impossible to anticipate such a tragedy and unthinkable that such an event could recur. Given this context, I argue that apologetic rhetoric was not the appropriate genre for the discourse that the University of Virginia needed deliver to after Yeardeley Love's death and George Hugueley's arrest, especially given the fact that the university was not initially accused of wrongdoing. Rather, in this rhetorical situation, I suggest that the use of a communication strategy informed by epideictic theory would have aided UVa in crafting a fitting response to this student-driven crisis.

*Development of the crisis: Issues and values at stake*

This section seeks to illuminate *why* the American public attended so closely to the scene at UVa in May 2010. With this goal in mind, I begin by identifying which social values and public issues contributed to the development of this crisis. In the first place, the University of Virginia, like any institution of higher education, has a well-defined duty to safeguard the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of its students, to care for them and prevent their harm to the best of its ability. UVa's inability to prevent the violent death of one of its students represented a distinct failure to uphold the public value of care.

In addition, the fact that Love was murdered by a fellow UVa lacrosse player calls into question both Hugueley's character and the character of the UVa lacrosse program. Hence, the ingroup/loyalty value was disregarded in this incident. Love and Hugueley belonged to the same group; in fact, as UVa students and lacrosse players, they belonged to the same in-group within the broader group, causing the absence of loyalty to appear even more disturbing.

Finally, blonde, white, and female, Love embodied the role of the innocent heroine, whose sanctity was destroyed by the aggressive male Hugueley (Farhi, 2012). After her death, Yeardeley Love was repeatedly referred to as an "angel" by friends and teammates; in their statement following Hugueley's conviction in February 2012, Love's family said, "Yeardeley's contagious smile, kind spirit and gentle touch have left this world but we know that heaven has an angel like no other" (Flaherty and Johnson, 2012). Based on these characterizations, Love's murder can also be interpreted as a violation of the purity/sanctity value.

Over the nearly two-year life-cycle of the crisis, multiple contexts were used to interpret and make sense of Love's death and Hugueley's arrest/guilt. The major public issues in play in this incident were gender, class, and sport; all three themes appeared and reappeared in media coverage of the incident. In fact, the "real" meaning of the event became one of the most consistently contested themes of the crisis. *People Magazine's* May 2010 cover story on Yeardeley Love's death opened with this statement: "They were private school pedigreed from well-to-do communities, talented on the lacrosse playing fields and popular with friends. Yeardeley Love and George Hugueley should have made the perfect pair" (Mascia, 2010). The *New York Times'* first story on the incident quotes

Charlottesville Police Department Chief Timothy Longo: “‘Charlottesville is just a wonderful place,’ Mr. Longo said. ‘Kids from all over the country come here, the best and brightest, and these are two of them, two successful athletes. It’s just an unbelievable situation. These are not the kinds of things we see in this community’” (Thamel, 2010).

As evidenced in these examples, nearly all media outlets that reported on the UVa lacrosse case employed antithesis in their coverage of the crisis, foregrounding the contrast between the reality of the crime and the appearance of the persons, background, and institution involved. As Aristotle points out in the *Rhetoric*, “the more briefly and antithetically such sayings can be expressed, the more taking they are, for antithesis impresses the new idea more firmly and brevity more quickly (1412a). The recurring use of antithesis in media coverage of the crisis demonstrates the public sentiment that “something like that” should not have happened at “a place like this” and reinforces the public’s need for explanation and resolution.

Antithesis is also a form of rhetorical simplification. As Burke (1969b) notes in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, “Since antithesis is so strong a verbal instrument in both rhetoric and dialectic, we may often find ‘short cuts’ where the extremes of a developmental series are presented as harshly antithetical” (p. 189). In the following samples of media and public interest in the incident, it should be clear that the development of the crisis was facilitated by the fact that so many of the issues at play in this case lent themselves to near-perfect antithetical depiction: female/male, angel/alcoholic, collegiate /criminal, athlete/ bully.

The issue of gender appeared primarily in descriptions of Love’s death as “relationship violence.” A piece published on May 6, 2010 by *ABC News* noted, “The violent history of the University of Virginia lacrosse player charged in his girlfriend’s

death –including a previous alleged attack on her that went unreported—has prompted calls for increased domestic violence vigilance” (Canning, Friedman, and Netter, 2010). Gender was also the issue foregrounded in UVa’s official communications; at a May 5, 2010 candlelight vigil UVa President John Casteen expressed this hope: “Wherever Yeardley’s name is recognized, that no woman, no person in this place, this community, this state, our nation need either fear for her safety or experience violence for any reason: not because of her sex, not because of her size, not because of an attacker’s advantage or arrogance or mindless sense of right to abuse, to harm, perhaps to kill” (Casteen, “Remarks,” 2010). Most recently, on April 18, 2012, Yeardley’s mother Sharon Love invoked her daughter’s death as a reason for supporting the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (Mackey, 2012).

The issue of class was ever-present in descriptions of the privilege and entitlement of all the actors in the UVa lacrosse case. On February 17, 2012, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a piece titled, “White, Wealthy and Pretty: A Murder Made for Media” that emphasized the elite backgrounds of both Love and Huguely: “She was an attractive young white woman, a promising student and athlete. He is the handsome, athletic scion of a wealthy family with deep roots in the Washington area. Enhancing the narrative of privilege and prestige, they attended an elite university and played intercollegiate lacrosse, a sport often associated with wealthy private schools” (Farhi, 2012). Around the same time, a columnist for the *Baltimore Sun* was especially struck by the contrast between the crisis and its elite backdrop: “Everyone involved is young, attractive, privileged, etc., etc. . . . I sense a small part of it [the shock], at least for those who live in this part of the country, is the stark contrast of so brutish a crime in so genteel a locale”

(Marbella, 2012). Considering the public's ongoing interest in the case, she suggests, "It's because of what it says about the role of class, the world of lacrosse, the culture of the hooking-up generation, etc., etc. The metaphors are indeed with us" (Marbella, 2012).

The issue of sport remained prominent over the twenty-one months that elapsed between Love's death and Huguely's conviction for second-degree murder; the case is still referred to as "the UVa lacrosse murder." As sociologists Eldon Snyder and Elmer Spreitzer (1974) note, "The phenomenon of sport represents one of the most pervasive social institutions in the United States. Sports permeate all levels of social reality. . . The salience of sports can be documented in terms of news coverage, financial expenditures, number of participants and spectators, hours consumed, and time samplings of conversations" (p. 468). This statement was made in 1974; if anything, the role of sport in shaping social reality has only increased over the past thirty-five years. Thus, of Love and Huguely, the *Washington Post* reported: "They were standout athletes who went to the University of Virginia to play for the school's nationally ranked lacrosse teams. George Huguely . . . had been the starting quarterback, an honor roll student and a lacrosse all-American at the renowned Landon School. Yeardeley Love . . . had been a four-year member of the lacrosse and field hockey teams at Notre Dame Prep in Baltimore" (Flaherty and Johnson, 2010).

With both victim and aggressor inhabiting the sphere of high-stakes collegiate athletics, it was inevitable that the public would raise questions regarding the culture of lacrosse and attempt to speculate what role it might have played in Huguely's deadly outburst. Two days after Love's death, *Politics Daily*, an online subsidiary of the *Huffington Post*, published an online column with the title, "Yeardeley Love Slaying: Is

Lacrosse's Close Culture Complicit?" (see Stiehm, 2010). The following day, popular sports commentary site *SBNation* ran a piece titled, "Murder At UVA: George Huguely, Yeardeley Love, and Lacrosse's Worst Case Scenario" (see Sharp, 2010). A story printed by the *New York Times* emphasized the closeness of the collegiate lacrosse community, citing Love's connections to players and coaches at Georgetown University and University of Maryland, among others. However, the *Times*' positive portrayal of lacrosse remained a minority among the mass amount of public attention.

*Timeline of events and description of statements: May 3, 2010 to May 23, 2010*

Around 2:15 a.m. on Monday May 3, 2010, emergency personnel in Charlottesville, Virginia were summoned to an apartment at 222 14th Street Northwest, less than six blocks from the University of Virginia Grounds. After unsuccessful cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) efforts, UVa fourth-year student Yeardeley Reynolds Love was pronounced dead at the scene. The first search warrant in this case was issued by the Charlottesville Circuit Court at 6:32 a.m., for items in Love's apartment, 222 14th Street Northwest, Apartment 9. The second search warrant was issued at 11:52 a.m., for the person of George Huguely V, who was already in Charlottesville Police custody at that time. The Charlottesville Police Department later stated that Huguely was arrested around six a.m. on May 3, 2010 (Flaherty, Johnson, and Yanda, 2010). The third search warrant was issued at 12:08 p.m. for items in Huguely's apartment, 230 14th Street Northwest, Apartment 6.

The first statement made by the University of Virginia was issued at 9:18 a.m. by UVa Police Chief Mike Gibson, who notified the university community that the Charlottesville Police Department was investigating the "suspicious death" of a UVa

student; Gibson also offered a list of basic safety reminders at the end of his message. At 1:33 p.m. on May 3, 2010, the Charlottesville Police Department issued a press release identifying Yeardeley Love as the deceased UVa student and naming George Huguely V as the suspect currently in custody, confirming that he was also a UVa student. Also at 1:33 p.m., then-University President John Casteen released his first official message. He referenced both UVa Police and Charlottesville PD statements, expressed grief at Love's death, and offered University support and professional counseling for affected students, faculty, and staff.

On Tuesday, May 4, 2010, UVa Athletic Director Craig Littlepage released a statement referencing Casteen's message. Littlepage's statement specifically commented on the UVa lacrosse teams and explained the university's decision of continue its lacrosse seasons into the upcoming NCAA national tournament. Also on May 4, the date was set for George Huguely's first pre-trial hearing: June 10, 2010. Huguely also withdrew from the University of Virginia on May 4 (Canning, Friedman, and Netter, 2010). That afternoon, UVa Student Council President Colin Hood released a letter to his fellow students, announcing a candlelight vigil to be held in memory of Yeardeley Love on May 5, "as a means of uniting the entire community."

On the evening of May 5, 2010, members of the UVa administration held an hour-long press conference on campus. Present at that conference were John Casteen (President of UVa), Allen Groves (Dean of Students), Patricia Lampkin (Chief Student Affairs Officer), and Craig Littlepage (Athletic Director) (Hawes, 2010). Also on May 5, Casteen spoke briefly at Love's memorial vigil in the McIntire Amphitheatre on campus.

On May 6, 2010, Marian Anderfuren, Director of Media Relations for UVa, released an announcement detailing arrangements for Love's funeral and briefly describing the candlelight vigil of the previous evening. On May 8, 2010, Yeardeley Love's funeral Mass was held in Towson, Maryland at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. Julie Myers, the head UVa women's lacrosse coach, spoke at the service, and members of the UVa men's lacrosse team served as pallbearers. On May 11, 2010, Marian Anderfuren again referenced Casteen's speech at Love's memorial vigil (5.5.10) in a University-wide "Tip of the Month" that focused on preventing and dealing with relationship violence.

On May 13, 2010, Carol Wood, Associate Vice-President of the Office of Public Affairs at UVa, issued a statement titled, "Correction sent to the *Washington Post* on May 13, 2010, in response to its May 8 story, 'Accused U-Va. player George Huguely attacked sleeping student, teammates say.'" Wood's statement recounts an altercation between George Huguely and one of his teammates, as well as their subsequent conversation with head UVa men's lacrosse coach Dominic Starsia. Specifically, Wood counters the *Washington Post's* report that Starsia was aware of Huguely's history of violent behavior and that that history had involved other UVa men's lacrosse players.

On May 23, 2010, Casteen dealt implicitly with the tragedy of Love's murder and Huguely's arrest in his Commencement Address, mentioning, "the realities of good and evil" and acknowledging, "Just as our University has not been perfect in your time here, the world to which you go is flawed and, in some senses, corrupt." Dealing with Love's death explicitly at the end of the Address, Casteen included "the name of Yeardeley Love" as one of the things that "goes away as you leave this place, but comes back in memory."

*Semantic analysis: Statements from May 3, 2010 to May 23, 2010*

A close examination of the text of the first ten statements of UVa (May 3 to May 23, 2010) reveals four distinct clusters of word choices. The cluster referencing Yeardeley Love contains all positive adjectives, praising and eulogizing a student who is now dead. A second cluster that can be described as the “corrective action cluster” contains mostly nouns and is slightly vague. Two different clusters describe UVa’s reaction to the incident, split almost evenly between expressions of anger and grief, and contain almost all negative nouns and adjectives, with the exception of two positive verbs and two positive nouns: appreciate[d], comfort[ing], support, and healing. [See Appendix D for the semantic analysis in its entirety.]

*Defeasibility as crisis communication strategy*

In his May 4, 2010 letter to the University of Virginia student body, Student Council President Colin Hood said of Yeardeley Love’s murder: “Many of us are in shock as to how such an act could occur.” In image repair discourse theory, this strategy is known as “defeasibility,” that is, a form of evasion of responsibility in which an organization “alleges a lack of information about or control over important elements of the situation” (Benoit, 1997, p.180). Statements such as, “we know no explanation of what appears now to have happened,” “however little we may not know,” and “we know nothing other than what appears in the Charlottesville Police Department’s more recent statement” are examples of the University of Virginia’s use of defeasibility following Love’s death and Hugueley’s subsequent arrest.

Throughout the student-driven crisis (SDC) precipitated by Love’s murder, defeasibility served as the University of Virginia’s primary crisis communication stance,

evidenced by the university's consistent public assertions of shock, ignorance, and anger in the face of the crisis. Functionally, however, defeasibility is nothing more than an elegant variation of "no comment." Therefore, as an institution of higher education with a responsibility to care for its students and prevent harm within its community, the University of Virginia seriously damaged its legitimacy by claiming defeasibility.

*Defeasibility and counterattack: UVa and the Washington Post*

In a *Sports Illustrated* article published mere days after Love's death and Huguely's arrest, Jon Wertheim described an eerie silence that seemed to pervade the campus of UVa in the aftermath of the tragedy: "Most Virginia students—in addition to the lacrosse players and men's and women's coaches Dom Starsia and Julie Myers—didn't want to speak publicly about the incident, complying with the wishes of Love's family, the UVA athletic department and the Inter-Sorority Council. (Love was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta.) But several students, speaking anonymously, wondered how the situation had been allowed to escalate. In short: Someone had to know something" (Wertheim, 2010). The question raised by Wertheim and many others—journalists, pundits, and community members alike—was, did someone know something and, if so, why had nothing been done? Throughout its first stage of crisis communication, UVa maintained an almost stony silence—until it broke that silence to respond to one specific, rather damning article that had been run by the *Washington Post* on May 8, 2010.

Among the fourteen official statements made by UVa after Love's death and Huguely's arrest, the "Correction sent to the *Washington Post*" written by Carol Wood, Associate Vice-President of Public Affairs, most clearly represents apologetic rhetoric. The primary strategy employed in this statement is, again, defeasibility. In the statement,

Wood writes: “In that story [published by the *Washington Post* on May 8, 2010], it was reported from anonymous sources that University of Virginia lacrosse player George Huguely attacked a sleeping teammate in February 2009. It was also reported from anonymous sources that U.Va. lacrosse Coach Dom Starsia *knew about the incident* and disciplined the two players, but allowed them to play in the next game” (emphasis added). The issue at stake here, then, is clearly that of knowledge.

Calling the *Washington Post*’s reporting “an inaccurate account,” Wood counters by denying that Starsia—or any UVa official—possessed the knowledge they were reported to have: “At no time did either player disclose to Coach Starsia the underlying facts or gravity of what had actually occurred between them.” However, Wood’s “Correction” evidences a tension between UVa’s claim(s) of defeasibility and media comment, in that the statement as a whole actually reveals the level of detail and complexity of knowledge that the University actually possessed regarding the case.

Moreover, in the final paragraph of her statement, Wood writes: “With an active criminal investigation still being conducted, the University must respect the judicial process and will not comment on the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the death of Yeardeley Love. Nevertheless, because of the inaccuracy of this particular report, the University has an obligation to correct it now.” This raises an interesting question: to whom does the University have an obligation? Not to Yeardeley Love, since neither her background nor her relationship to Huguely are ever mentioned in the piece. Not to George Huguely, since the statement does not deny that he attacked one of his teammates in February 2009. Not to the general public, since Wood’s statement contains no mention of journalistic integrity, quality of media information, or the reading public. Perhaps

Wood believes the University has a duty to the *Post*, though it seems improbable that, in the midst of a media firestorm, UVa would be concerned with providing media outlets with the most detailed and correct version of a conversation between a murder suspect and his coach.

I propose that the “obligation” that Wood mentions refers to two different entities: men’s lacrosse coach Dominic Starsia and UVa itself. Starsia, as the University official closest to the student-actors in this case, is the linchpin in UVa’s apologetic strategy. If Starsia knew about Huguely’s violent behavior and aggressive tendencies, particularly toward those closest to him, then it is logical to suggest that other UVa officials should or could have known as well, based on the principle of chain of command. With regard to UVa itself, it is clear that this particular story and its particular description of an openly violent Huguely, even among the myriads of other details reported after Love’s death, especially undermines the university’s strategy of defeasibility. Moreover, if UVa claims that it has no knowledge of “the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the death of Yeardeley Love” (Wood, “Correction sent”), the logical result is that it is incapable of preventing the recurrence of such a tragedy. This example therefore highlights the potential for tension between defeasibility and corrective action.

*Tension between defeasibility and corrective action*

Within the body of crisis communication research, Hearit (1995) describes corrective action as a “positive strategy” (p. 2) and Benoit (1997) adds, “this action can take the form of restoring the state of affairs before the offensive action, and/or promising to prevent the recurrence of the offensive act” (p. 181). However, it should be clear that a tension exists between defeasibility and corrective action. If an organization claims that

it did not possess pre-crisis knowledge and had no way of gaining that knowledge, then how can it simultaneously claim to possess the knowledge and expertise needed to effectively prevent such a crisis from occurring in the future? In such a situation, the organization is faced with the issue of diminished credibility—either it lacks essential knowledge or is guilty of withholding that knowledge from the public view.

This tension can be resolved, however, by describing post-crisis changes in policy or procedure, not as “corrective action,” but as “alignment action.” This reframing implies that a university is engaging in changes that will serve to bring its daily activity (see Dowling and Pfeffer, 1978, on goals, output, and method of operation) more closely in line with its current values, goals, or mission; alignment action, then, is a change in activity that is made so as to more clearly and strongly support pre-existing organizational values. With respect to defeasibility, however, I suggest that this is a clearly apologetic strategy that should be reserved for instances in which an organization has been directly accused of wrongdoing. Ultimately, “shock” is not a strong rhetorical strategy, especially for an institution of higher education, and especially when the shock-producing incident is the murder of one student by another student.

#### *Communication about the lacrosse issue*

The lacrosse issue is arguably the most complex element of “the UVa lacrosse murder” to dissect. In the first place, the involvement of collegiate athletics in an instance of student-driven crisis nearly always makes that case higher-profile than it might have been if none of the salient actors were student-athletes (see Snyder and Spreitzer, 1974). Also, given the fact that both the dead student and her attacker were UVa lacrosse players, murder and sport were inextricably intertwined from the moment

that news of the crisis broke. The initial statement from the Charlottesville Police Department on May 3, 2010, “University Student Found Deceased,” identified both Love and Huguely as lacrosse players, as does the “Message” from UVa President John Casteen. The University of Virginia addressed the issue of sport most directly on May 4, the day after Love’s death and Huguely’s arrest. The university’s Athletic Director, Craig Littlepage, announced that the men’s and women’s lacrosse teams would continue their seasons and would compete in the upcoming NCAA tournament. He also stated, “Our primary focus now will be on Yeardley’s family and the young women and young men on our lacrosse teams.”

By foregrounding the condition of UVA’s lacrosse program in his statement, Littlepage bolstered the added attention given to the case by sports media outlets such as *ESPN* and *Sports Illustrated*. By casting Yeardley Love as a student-athlete primarily, he encouraged that portrayal and the continued investigation into that part of her life as a UVa student. Littlepage’s statement isolates the UVa lacrosse teams, giving them elite and special status. This characterization also feeds the media portrayals of George Huguely as the entitled recipient of special treatment—above the honor code and reporting requirements expected of other UVa students. Littlepage’s statement effectively illustrates the way in which student-athletes at the University of Virginia are afforded special status/special treatment, contrary to the university’s claims that Huguely was held to the same code of conduct applied to all students. Also, the lacrosse program is weaker and less able to withstand scrutiny if it is split off from the rest of the university community; by focusing attention on the lacrosse issue, UVa effectively showed the media where to dig for salient information about the crisis.

In order to anesthetize the issue of sport, UVa should have minimized mention of lacrosse in its official statements, representing Yeardeley Love more consistently as a student and a member of the university community, less as an athlete. The statement attributed to Littlepage should have been handled by a member of the Office of Student Affairs (such as Patricia Lampkin, who spoke in February 2012 prior to the beginning of Hugueley's trial), or issued as a joint statement, in order to minimize the focus on sport. If it appears that the media has already begun to frame the crisis in terms of sport and entitlement, then it is unwise for an IHE to issue a statement that foregrounds athletics and indicates that student-athletes are currently receiving special attention and treatment. Rather, UVa should have discussed Love's death as the loss of a UVa student. The university should have folded the lacrosse issue back into the larger academic community, allowing that community to envelop and supersede the lacrosse program.

That being said, the statement by Littlepage is not a total loss. As Athletic Director, he eulogizes Love well, and his expressions of gratitude nicely connect UVa to the broader higher education community. At one point, Littlepage notes, "I am proud of the dignified way in which our students and coaches have responded to such a traumatic situation." This statement is an apt example of traditional epideictic discourse. Still, the overt mention of players, coaches, teams, and sport generally makes it very difficult to support any subsequent claims that Hugueley's violence and Love's death are not emblematic of the culture of lacrosse. An IHE that seeks to avoid associations between student misbehavior and college athletics would do well to lay disassociative groundwork in its initial and earliest statements. Simultaneously, the university seeking to minimize attention to sport should focus on the university community broadly and upon elements

of commonality between lacrosse players and the rest of UVa. In order to anesthetize the story, UVa should have attempted to fold the lacrosse issue back into the broader frame of university life.

*Scapegoating, identification, and spokesperson choice*

According to Benoit (1997), a secondary form of denial is blame-shifting, in which an organization claims “that another person or organization is actually responsible for the offensive act” (p. 180). One of the variations of blame-shifting that appears in the corporate *apologia* literature is scapegoating, a form of rhetorical disassociation that seeks to break the link between an organization and one or more of its members.

If rhetorical disassociation is the disuniting or separating of a complex entity into its constitutive elements, then the reverse of this process is best described by the term identification, made famous by Burke (1959) in *The Rhetoric of Motives*: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his” (p. 55, emphasis in original). Through the use of identification, rhetors—individual or corporate—are able to display and affirm the values that they and their communities hold in common. Therefore, I propose that identification represents an epideictic alternative to the scapegoating and blame-shifting discussed by organizational *apologia* scholars.

Identification is particularly necessary when an institution of higher education (IHE) chooses spokespersons during a crisis. As the (literal) embodiment of the IHE, spokespersons should be chosen from the perspective of the stakeholder: which values, in-groups, and organizational actors will the stakeholder identify the spokesperson with? Gender, race, age, and group affiliation should all be considered; the strongest

spokespersons are those that IHE stakeholders are likely to identify with positive values and with the victim rather than with the aggressor. Given the ubiquitousness of Burkean identification throughout rhetorical scholarship, including organizational rhetoric literature, it is strange that this theory has not been taken into consideration when discussing spokesperson choice.

In the first stage of “the UVa lacrosse case” (May 3, 2010 through May 23, 2010) spokesperson choice was notably poor, at least when assessed from the perspective of fostering identification. Specifically, the victim in the case, Yeardeley Love, was a young, pretty, wealthy, white woman, a lacrosse player, sorority girl, political science major, and a UVa student. Her attacker, George Hugueley V, was a young, wealthy white male, a lacrosse player, anthropology major, and a UVa student. Therefore, the core issues in the case, as previously discussed, were gender, sexuality, class, and sport. When comparing these facts with the qualities of the spokespersons chosen to represent UVa during the crisis, a clear contrast emerges between the victim and the persons chosen to speak on her behalf.

John Casteen, UVa President, was an elderly white male who embodied the university’s response of shock and anger. The two police spokesperson in the case, Longo and Gibson, were also male, but necessary as representatives of the expertise and authority of local law enforcement. Craig Littlepage, Athletic Director, was a middle-aged black male who embodied the lacrosse aspect of the case, an aspect that should have been minimized. Colin Hood, Student Council President, was a young white male who apparently had nothing in common with Yeardeley Love other than his status as a fourth-year UVa student. Marian Anderfuren, Director of Media Relations, a middle-aged white

woman, released only form statements, and did not appear in public. Carol Wood, Vice-President of Public Affairs, also a middle-aged white woman, did not speak publicly until she released the “Correction sent to the *Washington Post*.”

In a case centered on relationship violence and elite college athletics, it makes no sense for white, male, middle-aged administrators and a male African American athletic director to serve as spokespersons. Rather, UVa should have chosen spokespersons who could have spoken compassionately and convincingly about the core issues—especially gender—and public values at stake in Love’s death and Hugueley’s arrest. Specifically, female spokespersons would have been more likely to be identified with the victim and therefore with the resolution of the core issues in this case.

*The final stage of communication: February 1, 2012 to February 23, 2012*

On February 1, 2012, five days before the start of George Hugueley’s trial for the murder of Yeardeley Love, UVa President Teresa Sullivan issued a letter to the university community outlining UVa’s official position on the trial. Also on February 1, Patricia Lampkin, UVa’s Chief Student Affairs Officer, issued a letter addressed to UVa students listing resources for personal support and advice for handling interaction with media outlets. On February 2, 2012, University of Virginia law professor Anne Coughlin delivered a public lecture on criminal law and procedure prior to the start of Hugueley’s trial. On February 18, 2012, Coughlin spoke directly to *ABC News*, outlining what she believed were the salient issues at stake in the jury’s deliberations prior to Hugueley’s conviction. Finally, on February 23, 2012, the day after Hugueley was convicted of second-degree murder in connection with Love’s death, Sullivan issued the University of Virginia’s last official statement on Love’s murder and Hugueley’s trial.

In this final stage of “the UVa lacrosse case” (February 1, 2012 through February 23, 2012), spokesperson choice improved dramatically, at least in part due to the fact that Casteen’s successor was a woman—Teresa Sullivan. In fact, all four of the statements released by UVa from February 1, 2012 to February 23, 2012 were made by women. Also, a semantic analysis of this final stage of crisis communication displays a markedly different and more positive rhetorical tone. Language choices can be grouped into three distinct clusters: legal/technical, emotional, and active. In all four of these statements, emphasis is placed on UVa as a “caring community;” in fact, the phrase is used three times within four relatively short statements. The word “community” appears eleven times total. “Support” and “justice” both appear twice, as does the term “resources.”

## CHAPTER FIVE: VALUES-AFFIRMATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

### *Introduction*

This project has argued that organizational legitimacy theory (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975) provides a rationale for why some student-driven incidents are perceived as more critical than others. Legitimacy theory, in conjunction with moral foundations theory, also explains and predicts necessary conditions for the resolution of crisis. In this paradigm, the overarching purpose of crisis communication is to re-establish an organization's legitimacy when it has been called into question; that is, to make a case for congruence between organizational values and social values. Effective crisis communication, then, is communication that calls attention to areas of congruence between organizational values and social values *and* is perceived as legitimate by its audiences. More specifically, I have argued that productive crisis communication emphasizes harmony with, and commitment to, public values.

The model proposed in this chapter draws on the traditional understanding of crisis communication as apologetic rhetoric, yet ultimately argues for the inadequacy of *apologia* in situations of student-driven crisis. Despite the popularity of *apologia* as a framework for examining crisis discourse, there is also precedent in the crisis communication literature for the use of epideictic rhetoric as a theoretical lens. In particular, Hearit (1995) notes that some organizations engaging in crisis communication have benefited from “a positive strategy of corrective action and *epideictic identification* with key social values” (p. 2, emphasis added).

As a distinctive rhetorical situation, a student-driven crisis calls into question a college or university's consistency with public values. However, given the privileged

position that they hold in contemporary society, IHEs may not be immediately or directly accused of wrongdoing. Although a university is required to craft and deliver a public response to a student-driven crisis, its spectrum of rhetorical strategies is often much narrower than that of a corporation experiencing a comparable crisis. Moreover, as Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) note, “The greater the need for legitimation, the more suspect of legitimation attempts are constituents” of the organization (p. 186). Therefore, I theorize that for institutions of higher education in particular, the most effective crisis discourse addresses the values with which the public is most concerned and speaks in a direct and meaningful way about the issues that contributed to the crisis. This shift away from image repair and toward values-affirmation is expressed in the rhetorical tradition as a change in genre, a move away from *apologia* toward *epideixis*.

#### *A values-affirmation model for higher education crisis communication*

As previously discussed, discourse that emphasizes the affirmation of common values is termed “epideictic.” The crisis communication model that this project introduces draws heavily on rhetorical genre theory in an effort to understand and make use of *epideixis* as form of discourse that rebuilds legitimacy by “reinforc[ing] common values within a culture” (Oravec, 1976, p. 163). Moreover, although this model<sup>12</sup> uses examples of student-driven crisis to contextualize the following values-affirmation strategies, it should be clear that the value of this approach to crisis communication is not limited to institutions of higher education. Within this model, there are four categories of affirmation: values, others, self, and future, each with several variations.

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<sup>12</sup> The content of this section owes much of its structure to Benoit’s (1997) description of image repair discourse theory, particularly where he outlines strategies and variants for image repair.

### *Values-affirmation*

The first form of values-affirmation is simple affirmation. When, through organizational action, inaction, or omission, an institution of higher education (IHE) is perceived to have disregarded one or more public values (and especially if it is guilty), it should immediately, actively, and explicitly affirm its belief in those values. For example, following Jeanne Clery's murder, Lehigh University could have immediately reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining safe residential life, protecting women from violence, and caring for its students. Despite the simplicity of such statements, they are essential because they are non-controversial and represent principles with which the public cannot disagree.

Another form of values-affirmation is values-congruence; more specific than simple affirmation, expressions of values-congruence emphasize areas of *similarity* between a university's actions/mission and one or more public values. In the wake of Tyler Clementi's suicide, for instance, Rutgers University could have reiterated its commitment to the value of care, to welcoming and protecting all students, from all backgrounds, especially members of the LGBTQ community.

### *Others-affirmation*

These forms of epideictic discourse focus attention on the positive traits and actions of persons outside the university and are the most traditional rhetorical strategies. The first type of others-affirmation is encomium: during and after a crisis, an IHE should always express gratitude for the kindness of persons outside the campus community. A university should especially acknowledge the moments of human goodness that took shape in the midst of suffering. Examples include the emergency responders to the 2007

Virginia Tech massacre, law enforcement officials who investigate student homicides and universities who accepted students from New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2011) stress the importance of sharing good news in a crisis; others-affirmation emphasizes the importance of thanking the people responsible for those pieces of good news.

A second form of others-affirmation is eulogy. Despite the legal concerns associated with organizational apologies and expressions of regret, this model theorizes that an IHE cannot regain social legitimacy without acknowledging deceased community members, fallen heroes, and grieving families. Following a student-driven crisis in particular, it is more important for a university to speak and act compassionately than to bolster its legal position. The result of failure in this area can be seen in public reaction to Penn State University following the 2011 child abuse scandal; the university was heavily criticized for its failure to express regret and extend sympathy to the victims and families affected by the crisis.

The third others-affirmation strategy is agreement. The literature on corporate *apologia* emphasizes the value of counter-attack in crisis situations; in contrast, this strategy focuses on trying to discover and emphasize areas of agreement between the university and critical stakeholders or hostile interest groups. Like simple affirmation, this strategy focuses on diffusing public scrutiny and hostility by producing simple, non-controversial statements that emphasize institutional support for commonly-held public values.

### *Self-affirmation*

There are two variants of self-affirmation: amplification and identification. This form of values-affirmation emphasizes the positive actions and qualities of the organization that is being scrutinized. Amplification is a strategy in which an IHE explains and describes the things that it did well during the crisis; this form of values-affirmation focuses on highlighting organizational strengths rather than covering or minimizing weak points. For example, a university could point to any relevant awards or certifications that it has earned, or describe areas in which its commitment to values has never been questioned. After experiencing a series of student suicides in early 2010, Cornell University reminded the public that its student mental health programs are seen as models by other university health and wellness centers; they also recruited the chair of the American College Health Association's Mental Health Best Practices Task Force to vouch for the adequacy of their student mental health programs (see Epstein, 2010).

As previously discussed, the strategy of identification represents the reverse of rhetorical disassociation, or scapegoating. Rather than arguing that a misbehaving student—likely, the criminal or aggressive party—is not representative of the campus community, an IHE would offer reasons why another party—probably the innocent victim of the crime—is in fact representative of the institution. The goal of this strategy is to draw associations between the IHE and sympathetic parties, not to explicitly break the link between a university and its troubled students.

### *Future-affirmation*

The strategies in this section are rooted in a perspective similar to Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger's (2011) view of crisis as an opportunity for organizational progress. Future-

affirmation strategies emphasize an IHE's plan to move beyond the crisis it is currently experiencing; there are three distinct ways that an organization can do this. First, positive intentionality is used to emphasize an IHE's current positive intentions, in contrast to focusing on its regret for past action or inaction. In this strategy, a university clearly and confidently states the good that it intends to accomplish as it moves past the crisis situation at hand.

Similarly, alignment [action] actively attributes post-crisis changes in policy or operations, not as "corrective," but as the result of an intensified commitment to pre-crisis organizational values. For example, a university that has been accused of handling sexual assault allegations improperly would describe policy changes, not as "new" or "remedial," but as evidence of its continuing mission to protect and empower women.

Finally, post-crisis reparation and compensation efforts tend to add to public perception of an IHE's guilt or negligence. If it appears that a symbolic, financial gesture is needed to rebuild social legitimacy, this can be accomplished through philanthropy rather than compensation. For example, after experiencing a crisis created by a hazing-related student death, a university such as Florida A&M could announce its establishment of a scholarship in the deceased student's name, or make a generous donation to an organization nationally-recognized for its work in hazing education and prevention.

	<b>TYOLOGY OF VALUES-AFFIRMATION STRATEGIES</b>	
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key characteristic</i>	<i>Illustration</i>
<b>Values</b>		
Simple affirmation	Actively and explicitly affirm core public values	"This is what we believe is good and true."
Values-congruence	Emphasize congruence between organizational and public values	"We believe in the same ideals you do."
<b>Others</b>		
Encomium	Praise any good deeds that have been done	"Good deeds have also been done here."
Eulogy	Pay homage to victims, heroes, and families	"As a community, we mourn and regret this suffering."
Agreement	Seek areas of commonality with hostile groups	"We agree with you on these points."
<b>Self</b>		
Amplification	Draw attention to organizational strengths	"These are the best aspects of our organization"
Identification	Draw associations between yourself and sympathetic parties	"We fall into that category too."
<b>Future</b>		
Positive intentionality	Say what good you mean to do as you move past the crisis.	"This is what we mean to do [now]."
Alignment [action]	Cast changes in policy/operations as consistent, not novel	"We are moving more in line with our current mission/values."
Philanthropy	Use finances for charitable giving rather than reparation	"We are financially demonstrating our support of this value."

## CONCLUSION

The primary question that this project has attempted to answer is, what can an institution of higher education say in the wake of a student-driven crisis? To answer this question, I turned to epideictic theory to propose a crisis communication model that calls attention to values-affirmation. Although crisis communication has traditionally been studied as a form of apologetic discourse, this project suggested that for institutions of higher education, a crisis communication strategy rooted in *epideixis* may be more effective for resolving student-driven crises and rebuilding social legitimacy. The secondary question that this project sought to answer is why some instances of student misconduct develop into crises, while others do not. After reviewing numerous recent student-driven incidents, this project theorized that only those incidents that involve violations of social values (particularly with regard to serious public issues such as race and gender) are likely to develop into crises. Thus, this research supports Dowling and Pfeffer's (1975) finding that perceptions of values-incongruence often lead to crises of social legitimacy.

### *Chapter summary*

In sum, Chapter One introduced crisis at the University of Virginia as this project's rhetorical artifact and provided a brief description of the contemporary American institution of higher education and its cultural landscape. Chapter Two provided an extensive review of the organizational communication research and rhetorical theory relevant to this project's exploration of crisis communication strategies and epideictic discourse. Chapter Three presented an overview of the types of student misconduct that occur on contemporary college campuses and incorporated moral

psychology and legitimacy theory to model the process by which certain incidents develop into full-blown higher education crises. Chapter Four analyzed the crisis communication of the University of Virginia following the murder of Yeardeley Love and the arrest of George Huguely V in May 2010. That chapter traced the development of the crisis, identified the social values and public issues at stake, provided an overview of media coverage of the crisis, and critiqued the rhetorical strategies employed by UVA. Chapter Five summarized the findings of this project by unveiling a values-affirmation model for crisis discourse. This model presents a collection of communication strategies informed by epideictic rather than judicial rhetoric. When apologetic discourse is unlikely to be productive, especially in the absence of an explicit *kategoria*, values-affirmation provides an alternative set of message options for an institution facing a legitimacy crisis.

This project intended to clarify the range of message options available to an institution of higher education (IHE) facing a student-driven crisis (SDC), particularly with regard to the appropriate genre for such a rhetorical moment. For a university facing explicit accusations of wrongdoing or negligence, speech of self-defense, *apologia*, is clearly the appropriate rhetorical choice. However, in crisis situations where the *locus* of responsibility is unclear, or is shared between an IHE and its student(s), epideictic strategies are a far more productive way to resolve the crisis and rebuild legitimacy. In fact, this study indicates that values-affirmation encompasses a greater range of rhetorical strategies than was originally expected: institutions may choose to simply affirm social values, to emphasize their own values, to agree with the values of others, or to pledge future values-affirmation.

### *Limitations and directions for future research*

This project was limited by the fact that only one student-driven crisis was analyzed in depth. A longer study might compare the message strategies used by multiple universities facing the same type of crisis situation. Also, future research on higher education communication should consider contrasting the rhetorical choices of IHEs in good times and in bad; such a study would be beneficial in determine how proactive IHEs are in seeking “to build and nurture positive relationships with all publics before an issue erupts” (Gonzalez and Herrero-Pratt, 1996, p. 85). Additional research is particularly needed to test and apply the values-affirmation model that this project proposed. Though this project focused specifically on message options in the context of higher education crisis, it is possible that values-affirmation as a strategy for crisis communication may be productive for other types of organizations; more research is needed to explore this possibility.

### *Final thoughts on higher education crisis communication*

Ultimately, this project has benefited from nearly two years of retrospect; it has been determined in a court of law that Yeardeley Love was indeed murdered by her on-again, off-again boyfriend, George Huguely V. It is also now clear that “the UVa lacrosse murder” garnered public scrutiny and media coverage similar in magnitude to the 2006 Duke lacrosse case and the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre. Today, we know that the space occupied by these crises in public memory is secure, though their causes and implications remain contested territory.

I have theorized that the legitimacy of American higher education as a whole is undermined each time a serious incident is perceived to represent a critical incongruence

with social values. Crisis communication, then, must recognize and respond to this rhetorical moment. Institutions of higher education must recognize the damage that these incidents inflict upon their legitimacy, and they must actively and explicitly reaffirm their desire to adhere to and promote social values.

Communication strategies and rhetorical choices cannot alter the facts of student misconduct and may not be able to prevent them from developing into a crisis. Rather, the role of organizational rhetoric in a student-driven crisis is to heal the rupture between an institution and its stakeholders, to reaffirm commitment to common values. As Timothy Crusius (1986) explains: “Basically, rhetoric seeks to build a community, a sense of oneness amid diversity of conflicting interests and values” (p. 28). If, as this project theorizes, a crisis is produced when public values have been disregarded, then progress is made toward crisis resolution when those same values are substantively reaffirmed. It may not be enough for an institution to merely verbalize its commitment to values; however, this project argues that a higher education crisis cannot be resolved unless public values are publicly acknowledged and affirmed.

## EPILOGUE

On Tuesday, May 1, 2012, nearly two years to the day after her daughter Yeardeley's murder, Sharon Love filed a wrongful death complaint in the Circuit Court of Louisa County, Virginia. That suit named four defendants: Dom Starsia (Head Men's Lacrosse Coach for UVa), Marc Van Arsdale (Associate Head Men's Lacrosse Coach for UVa), Craig Littlepage (Athletic Director for UVa), and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Perhaps most relevant to the scope and themes of this study, Paragraph 3 of that Complaint reads: "The defendant, the Commonwealth of Virginia, operates the University of Virginia (UVA and the Commonwealth of Virginia are referred herein as "UVA") and is liable to the plaintiff pursuant to the Virginia Tort Claims Act and as the employer of its agents and employees who acted negligently and/or grossly negligently." The analysis of this new turn of events, though important, must be left for another time and, perhaps, another graduate student.

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APPENDIX A: University of Virginia spokespersons and other persons of interest

**Andurfuren, Marian.** UVa Director of Media Relations. Currently affiliated with UVa.

**Casteen, John T., III.** UVa President at the time of Yeardeley Love's death, spoke at the candlelight vigil in her honor and at the 2010 Final Exercises, during which she was awarded a posthumous degree. Became President Emeritus in August 2010, currently serves as a director for SAGE Publications and Altria Group Inc. (formerly Philip Morris Companies Inc.).

**Gibson, Michael.** UVa Chief of Police at the time of Yeardeley Love's death. Currently affiliated with UVa.

**Groves, Allen.** UVa Dean of Students at the time of Yeardeley Love's death, responded to media outlets. Currently affiliated with UVa.

**Hood, Colin.** UVa Student Council President at the time of Yeardeley Love's death, produced a written statement on Love's death that was distributed to UVA community via *UVa Today*. Also spoke with media outlets.

**Huguely, George V.** UVa fourth-year student and lacrosse player at the time of the incident, arrested and charged with first-degree murder in the death of Yeardeley Love, with whom he had a relationship at one point in time. Convicted of second-degree murder and grand larceny in the Circuit Court of Charlottesville, Virginia on February 22, 2012. Jury recommended a sentence of 26 years.

**Lampkin, Patricia.** UVa Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer. Issued letter to UVa students offering support and advice prior to the trial of George Huguely. Currently affiliated with UVa.

**Littlepage, Craig.** UVa Athletic Director at the time of Yeardeley Love's death, spoke to media during multiple press conferences, announced controversial decision that UVa teams would continue their seasons in the first round of the 2010 NCAA lacrosse tournaments. Now reports directly to UVa President Teresa Sullivan rather than to Michael Strine, who replaced Leonard Sandridge as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer in 2011.

**Longo, Timothy.** Charlottesville Chief of Police at the time of Yeardeley Love's death. Major spokesperson for local law enforcement in media accounts of the crisis.

**Love, Yeardeley.** UVa fourth-year student, women's lacrosse player found dead in her off-campus apartment bedroom early in the morning of May 3, 2010. Cause of death determined to be blunt force trauma to the head. Her ex-boyfriend George Huguely V was convicted of second-degree murder on February 22, 2012.

**Myers, Julie.** UVA Head Women's Lacrosse Coach at the time of Yeardeley Love's death. Spoke to the *Roanoke Times* following UVA's win in the first round of the 2010 NCAA Tournament. Currently affiliated with UVA.

**Sandridge, Leonard.** UVA Chief Operating Officer at the time of Yeardeley Love's death, gained media attention for remarks regarding Hugueley's guilt. Stepped down from his position in July 2011, remains employed by UVA as a part-time adviser.

**Starsia, Dominic.** UVA Head Men's Lacrosse Coach at the time of Yeardeley Love's death. Did not respond to media outlets despite speculation that he knew of Hugueley's violent behavior. Currently affiliated with UVA.

**Sullivan, Teresa.** Current UVA President, succeeded John Casteen after Love's death. Issued two public statements regarding the trial of former UVA student George Hugueley. Previously served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2006-2010).

**Whiteley, Caitlin.** Yeardeley Love's roommate, who notified law enforcement of her roommate's unresponsiveness. Spoke to the *Roanoke Times* following UVA's win in the first round of the 2010 NCAA Tournament. Graduated from UVA in May 2010, testified in Hugueley's 2012 trial.

**Wood, Carol.** UVA Associate Vice President, Office of Public Affairs, responded to the *Washington Post's* assertion that Coach Starsia was aware of an altercation between George Hugueley and a teammate prior to Love's death. Currently affiliated with UVA.

## APPENDIX B: Official University of Virginia communications

A Message from Mike Gibson, Chief of Police  
Monday, May 3, 2010 (9:18 a.m.)

This email is to alert the community that the Charlottesville Police Department is conducting an investigation on the suspicious death of one of our students in a private residence in the 14th Street area. While very few details are available at this time we would encourage the community to visit the UVA Homepage for updated information.

While Charlottesville remains a relatively safe environment, crimes do occur in our community. The best defense is to be prepared and to take responsibility for your own safety and for that of your friends and fellow students. A few key reminders:

Trust your instincts about a person or situation. If you feel uncomfortable, immediately report your concerns to police by calling 911.

If you are on the Grounds and need help, pick up one of the blue-light telephones. You will be immediately connected to University Police. Be aware of your surroundings. Do not let a cell phone conversation or listening to music distract you when crossing the street or in any type of situation that calls for your full attention.

Avoid isolated areas and walking alone at night. Use SafeRide (434-242-1122), walk with friends, or take a late-night weekend bus.

Keep your doors and windows locked.

Never allow strangers to follow you into a locked building and gain entry by “tailgating” you once you swipe the card reader in a residence hall. Also, never prop open card-reader doors.

If you see any of the following, immediately call the police at 911: a prowler, someone peeping into a residence, an individual watching, photographing or filming an area, or any other suspicious behavior.

Work with your neighbors and fellow community members to ensure a safe environment. For additional safety tips from University Police, please see <http://www.virginia.edu/uvapolice/prevention.html#Residence>.

Retrieved from University of Virginia emergency communication web page  
<http://www.virginia.edu/emergency/message050310.html>

Message from President Casteen  
Monday, May 3, 2010 (1:33 p.m.)

Earlier today, we released a statement about a Charlottesville Police investigation of an apparent homicide in which the victim is a University of Virginia student. A just-released update of an earlier Charlottesville Police statement about this investigation identifies the victim as Yeadley Love, a fourth-year student from Cockeysville, Maryland, and a Varsity lacrosse player. The updated Charlottesville Police Department statement appears just below this one along with advice to students from University Police Chief Michael Gibson. The Charlottesville Police statement also discloses that George Huguely, a fourth-year student from Chevy Chase, Maryland, and a Varsity men's lacrosse player, has been charged with First Degree Murder, and is in custody at the Charlottesville/Albemarle jail. We urge all students and faculty/staff to read both of the following statements with care.

Although we know nothing other than what appears in the Charlottesville Police Department's more recent statement, this death moves us to deep anguish for the loss of a student of uncommon talent and promise, and we express the University's and our own sympathy for Yeadley's family, team-mates, and friends. That she appears now to have been murdered by another student compounds this sense of loss by suggesting that Yeadley died without comfort or consolation from those closest to her. We mourn her death and feel anger on reading that the investigators believe that another student caused it. Like students who have contacted us in the last few minutes, we know no explanation of what appears now to have happened.

Police investigators and the courts will eventually determine what happened and make judgments on the basis of evidence submitted by the police and the Commonwealth's Attorney. Meantime, along with all in the University and family members and friends elsewhere, we grieve and ache for this loss. It is easy to imagine that professional counseling services may prove useful to any number of students as we try to assimilate this information. If you wish to meet with a counselor or one of the deans, call the office of the dean of students at 924-7133, and if you believe that a friend or acquaintance needs support and is not asking for it, call the same number, and explain what you have seen. Don't hesitate to call. Don't feel embarrassment about calling. Don't keep quiet about a grieving friend who seems to need assistance but to be unable to request it.

And let us all acknowledge that, however little we may not know now about Yeadley Love's death, we do know that she did not have or deserve to die--that she deserved the bright future she earned growing up, studying here, and developing her talents as a lacrosse player. She deserves to be remembered for her human goodness, her capacity for future greatness, and not for the terrible way in which her young life has ended.

Retrieved from University of Virginia emergency communication web page  
<http://www.virginia.edu/emergency/message050310.html>

A Statement from the Charlottesville Police Department  
Monday, May 3, 2010 (1:33 p.m.)

#### University Student Found Deceased (Update)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA – Regarding the death of a University of Virginia student occurring at a 14th ST N.W. apartment, the victim has since been identified as 22 year old, Yeardeley Love. Ms. Love was a fourth year University of Virginia Student from Cockeysville, Maryland who played on the Women’s Lacrosse Team.

Preliminary investigation by detectives revealed that Ms. Love is the victim of an apparent homicide. She suffered visible physical trauma, however the specific cause of death is undetermined pending an autopsy.

George Huguely, a senior at the University of Virginia from Chevy Chase MD who plays for the UVA Men’s lacrosse team, has been charged with First Degree Murder and is in custody at the Charlottesville/Albemarle jail.

According to witnesses, Huguely and Love had a past relationship.

Charlottesville Police are continuing to investigate the case and will provide more details as they become available.

Anyone with additional information about this incident is asked to call Charlottesville Police Sergeant Mark Brake at 970-3970 or Crime Stoppers at 977-4000.

Retrieved from University of Virginia emergency communication web page  
<http://www.virginia.edu/emergency/message050310.html>

## A Message from U.Va. Athletic Director Craig Littlepage About Yeardeley Love

May 4, 2010 — The loss of any young person is tragic. When that young person has the talent, personality, and potential of someone like Yeardeley Love, the loss goes much deeper.

Yesterday President Casteen wrote a moving message about Yeardeley to the University community. His thoughts were presented eloquently and powerfully, summarizing the uniquely talented student that Yeardeley Love was. In comments made by her teammates and friends, Yeardeley was described as an “angel” and the type of person who would light up any room. She was a dedicated student-athlete and a natural leader.

We are all heartbroken that we will not see the full potential that this wonderful young woman would have brought to our lives and to our community.

Our primary focus now will be on Yeardeley’s family and the young women and young men on our lacrosse teams.

The students are under tremendous stress and have experienced a huge loss. Our students’ welfare will be continually observed over the coming days and weeks so that we are poised to ensure they are healing and coping as best as can be expected. Beginning with the early morning hours on Monday, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean of Students, and Counseling and Psychological Services deployed staff to assist our lacrosse student-athletes.

A part of their healing will be getting our students back into some of their routines. In the case of the women’s and men’s programs, our lacrosse teams will honor Yeardeley by continuing their seasons. We anticipate both teams will be selected for the NCAA Tournaments and they will represent the University of Virginia as they always have.

In the past 24 hours numerous individuals throughout college athletics and higher education have expressed their concern and support for the University of Virginia. Their thoughtful words are appreciated at this difficult time.

I am proud of the dignified way in which our students and coaches have responded to such a traumatic situation. The parents of our students also have my appreciation for the way in which they mobilized and joined us as plans were put together to assist the teams. Finally, it is comforting to see how the University community has rallied in support of all who have been touched by Yeardeley’s life and her passing.

Retrieved from UVa Today website

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=11725>.

U.Va.'s Student Council to Hold Candlelight Vigil for Yeardeley Love on May 5  
May 4, 2010

Dear Students:

This is a difficult time for our community. The violent death of fourth-year student Yeardeley Love has left her many friends, classmates, and teammates grief-stricken. Many of us are in shock as to how such an act could occur.

Yeardeley's death comes at the end of a year marked by other student deaths and acts of violence within the community. At the University-wide memorial service last Friday, we remembered the lives of six of our fellow students who had passed away during this school year. Little did we know that we would experience another loss so soon within our community.

Student Council feels it is important to come together during this sad time. As a means of uniting the entire community, we will be holding a candlelight vigil tomorrow evening, May 5, at 8 p.m. in the Amphitheatre. President John Casteen, Fourth-Year Class President Sarah Elaine Hart, and I will offer brief remarks, accompanied by musical tributes and the candlelight vigil. The program will last about an hour and is open to all.

Although I know this is a busy, stressful time for students just as we start exams, I hope you will come tomorrow evening for this opportunity to reach out to one another in comfort, support, and unity.

For more information, please visit [www.uvastudentcouncil.com](http://www.uvastudentcouncil.com).

Sincerely,

Colin Hood  
Student Council President  
[colin.hood@virginia.edu](mailto:colin.hood@virginia.edu)

Retrieved from UVa Today website  
<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=11721>

President Casteen's remarks at the candlelight vigil for Yeardley Love  
May 5, 2010

There are profound ironies in our gathering here tonight for this purpose. This is the spring time. It's the time of year for renewal, for new beginnings. And yet we have come here to grieve the ending of a young life, of Yeardley Love's life, one full of promise and high prospects—and one not unlike yours.

I want to talk tonight about Yeardley Love, and I want to talk about you, and about this community—about us. Some of what I have to say is very hard. Bear with me, and listen.

First, about Yeardley: We know little at this point about Yeardley's dying. The prosecutor has found cause to bring the charge of murder. The defense attorney has described her death as an accident. This is not the forum to examine those charges or the evidence that will eventually make its way to court.

But it is a forum for acknowledging what we do know. That includes: that Yeardley Love accomplished much in her too-brief life; that she earned the respect of those around her—her classmates, her faculty mentors, coaches, sisters in her sorority, her roommates, certainly her family; that she excelled in what she undertook to do in life, and she excelled in what she chose to be; that Yeardley Love did nothing to deserve to be attacked and beaten, to deserve to suffer the injuries of which we have all read in the police reports, to deserve to die; indeed for that matter, that no woman beaten, thrown against walls, or in any other way abused has ever deserved either to suffer or to die.

My hope for Yeardley, and for you, is that her dying inspires an anger, a sense of outrage that engenders determination here and wherever Yeardley's name is recognized that no woman, no person in this place, this community, this state, our nation need either fear for her safety or experience violence for any reason: not because of her sex, not because of her size, not because of an attacker's advantage or arrogance or mindless sense of right to abuse, to harm, perhaps to kill; and then that memory of Yeardley's name, her personal strengths, her successes, her human worth may survive the memory of the dying about which we ache tonight, and that you and we and all who know the story of Yeardley Love will learn the lessons of her living, of her life.

And then I want to talk about you for a few minutes: take something away from this event. Take with you the determination that you will speak up for yourself, that you will act when you see or hear about abuse or violence in the world around you. If your relationship is unhealthy or toxic, seek help, seek support. Talk to your dean. Seek out a faculty member. Come talk to me. If necessary go to the police, or let us take you to the police. If you fear for yourself or for others any form of violence, act. Seek the support that belongs to you, because you belong to us. Demand and expect support, respect, and assistance when you do that. Help your friend in the same way if she (or he) needs help of the same kind. Don't hear a scream, don't watch abuse, don't hear stories of abuse from your friends—and keep quiet. Speak out. Find me; I will go with you to the police.

We all enjoy the privilege of living here in what we call—and rightly—a community of trust. I have believed you; you have believed one another; we have learned to trust one another here. Leave tonight with knowledge that the blows and abuse that somehow ended Yeardeley's life threaten all of us, threaten you, and threaten this community of trust—that violence and abuse left unconfroanted can and will destroy this culture that we love.

Addressing the shock and the grief that all of us feel tonight is hard. It's also something we owe to Yeardeley Love, and we owe it to one another. You do not have to do that alone. If you need someone to listen, to act on your behalf, to help, call the numbers that you know, or remember 924-7133. Call 4-7133. Don't hesitate, don't wait for someone else – do it tonight, do it first thing in the morning. And again, if you believe that you know something that threatens one of your friends, do it for Yeardeley Love—call.

The net of this as I understand this community, our place, your identities as people whom I respect and cherish is that the lesson to learn—the value for you of remembering Yeardeley Love for what she was—is that you choose to live, that you guard against the events that led to Yeardeley's death by recognizing evil, by recognizing danger, by seeing it for what it is whether it is your own or your neighbor's, by choosing to preserve this community of trust. Choose now, tonight, to honor Yeardeley Love's life. Promise yourself that wherever you go from this place in future years, you take with yourself the sense of vicious loss that tonight commemorates.

And tuck away in your soul the knowledge that neither Yeardeley Love nor any woman ever attacked has deserved it, that no victim in the end has to suffer, has to die, but that together we are the protection, that we must act together to protect one another and to see to it that the things we've learned here become and remain true in the world to which we go after this place.

May God bless Yeardeley Love.

John T. Casteen III, president

May 5, 2010

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from

## Yeardley Love's Funeral Set for Saturday

May 6, 2010 — The funeral for fourth-year University of Virginia student Yeardley R. Love will be held Saturday in Towson, Md.

Her family will receive friends at Ruck Towson Funeral Home, 1050 York Road, Towson, on Friday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on Saturday at 10 a.m. The church is at 5200 N. Charles St., Towson. Burial will be private.

Love was the daughter of Sharon Donnelly Love and the late John Love. She is survived by her mother; her sister, Lexi; aunts and uncles Debbie and George McChesney, Kathy Solomon, Lawre and Steve Langhoff, and Granville and Virginia Swope; cousins Lawren, Meagan and Mary Ryan McChesney; Ted, Danielle, Greg, and Lourie Langhoff; Sharon and Scott Robinson; Chris and Callie Solomon; and Tricia and Dave Shuster.

Memorial contributions can be made to The Yeardley Love Memorial Fund at Notre Dame Preparatory School, 815 Hampton Lane, Towson Md. 21286 or to The Yeardley Love Women's Lacrosse Scholarship Fund for the Virginia Athletic Foundation, 1815 Stadium Road, Room 260, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

Love was found dead in the early morning hours of Monday. George Huguely, who had been a U.Va. student, is charged with first-degree murder.

A four-year member of the women's lacrosse team and member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, Love would have graduated on May 23. She will receive her degree posthumously.

Love was remembered Wednesday evening at a candlelight vigil organized by the Student Council in the McIntire Amphitheatre. Addressing the thousands in attendance were President John T. Casteen III; Sarah Elaine Hart, president of the fourth-year trustees; and Colin Hood, Student Council president. The Virginia Belles and Virginia Gentlemen performed.

— By Marian Anderfuren (Director of Media Relations)

Retrieved from UVa Today website

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=11750>

Tip of the Month: Dating and Domestic Violence

May 11, 2010 — In his remarks at the candlelight vigil for University of Virginia student Yeardeley Love , U.Va. President John T. Casteen III charged members of the U.Va. community to recognize abuse and act on it, whether experiencing it firsthand or observing it in others.

The U.Va. Women's Center's website provides several resources on relationship violence, including:

Domestic Violence: Myths and Realities

Relationship Checklist

Is Your Relationship Healthy?

Safety Strategies for Survivors of Abuse

Other sites to find more information on relationship violence include Red Flag Campaign, Live Strong and Dating Violence Prevention Center.

For information, contact the Office of Emergency Preparedness at 434-982-0565 or [uvaoep@virginia.edu](mailto:uvaoep@virginia.edu).

— By Marian Anderfuren (Director of Media Relations)

Retrieved from UVa Today website

Correction sent to the *Washington Post* on May 13, 2010, in response to its May 8 story, "Accused U-Va. player George Huguely attacked sleeping student, teammates say" May 13, 2010

I am writing in reference to the story headlined "Accused U.Va. player George Huguely attacked sleeping student, teammates say" that ran in the Saturday, May 8, *Washington Post*.

In that story, it was reported from anonymous sources that University of Virginia lacrosse player George Huguely attacked a sleeping teammate in February 2009. It was also reported from anonymous sources that U.Va. lacrosse Coach Dom Starsia knew about the incident and disciplined the two players, but allowed them to play in the next game.

This is an inaccurate account.

Influenced by *The Washington Post's* error, reporters in other media have in some instances mistakenly reported this as a story about some mishandling on Coach Starsia's part. It is not that.

The University has learned that on the Monday following the Saturday night attack by Mr. Huguely on his teammate, both players went together to meet with Coach Starsia and informed him that they had gotten into a "scuffle." They said that they wanted him to be aware of it, but that they had worked things out and everything was OK between them.

At no time did either player disclose to Coach Starsia the underlying facts or gravity of what had actually occurred between them. Coach Starsia asked the players if they wanted to discuss the incident further, but both declined, repeating that they were OK and had worked things out. They told him that they shared the blame for what had happened and had apologized to one another.

Because the other student had a bruised eye, Coach Starsia asked him to stay behind after Mr. Huguely departed. At that time he asked the student if there was something more he wanted to discuss regarding the incident. The student declined to go into any detail, again saying that the two had resolved their differences. A University official also has spoken with this now former student and he has corroborated the description of events provided by Coach Starsia.

Coach Starsia's father died the day before the *Post* story appeared. The coach was, understandably, unavailable to clarify the facts surrounding the event.

With an active criminal investigation still being conducted, the University must respect the judicial process and will not comment on the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the death of Yeadley Love. Nevertheless, because of the inaccuracy of this particular report, the University has an obligation to correct it now.

With regards,  
Carol Wood, Associate Vice President, Office of Public Affairs

Retrieved from *UVa Today*  
[http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/corrections/051310\\_wp\\_correction.html](http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/corrections/051310_wp_correction.html)

Selections from Commencement Address, University of Virginia  
Delivered by John T. Casteen III on May 23, 2010

“Now, this raises a question for those of you in this graduating class: What will you do with the knowledge you have acquired here? How will you act in the world? Will you use your learning? Will you derive power from your new knowledge? And if you do that, how will you use that power, and what difference will it make to the world in the generation for which you become responsible as you go from here today?

These questions occur within contexts, of course, and the contexts include the realities of good and evil. I'm using the terms here in the secular sense. They have to do with both personal and public concepts of good and evil. Just as our University has not been perfect in your time here, the world to which you go is flawed and, in some senses, corrupt. In many parts of the world, evil rules and visits destruction and inhuman conditions of life on those least deserving of it and least able to protect themselves from harm. Unjust war and civic unrest, political oppression and military atrocities, acts of senseless violence that dumbfound us with their cruelty and disregard for human life — these have been front-page stories for most of the last century, and longer. They are an element of the ambiguity that John Keats described as an element of the modern mind. Sometimes dishonesty is or seems to be rewarded, and integrity ignored.

And yet, goodness also has existed here in your time as a student, and it exists also in the world to which you go now. It exists, though, with the condition that good in the world to which you go is yours to foster, to create. You have the capacity and the obligation to fight evil and inequity. Albert Camus wrote that "The evil that is in the world almost always comes out of ignorance ..." Knowledge, then, is evil's first enemy and good's first line of defense. The challenge, of course, is for you to use what you have learned here in the role of agent for good. You have presented yourselves today well-prepared to accept this challenge. . .”

“. . . What goes away as you leave this place, but comes back in memory and comes back in reality when you come back to visit here: the murmur that you hear in libraries or in study groups as people work together in the evening. The sounds of music. The sounds of people talking to their parents on cell phones as they walk through corridors or down the Lawn. The sound of ROTC units running past on their morning workouts. The sounds of the marching band practicing at Carr's Hill Field. The sounds of student life — sorority rush, being together in the groups that define the community of student existence. The sounds of carols sung right at the end of the semester, as you would rather go home, but then you hear that music and you stay a bit longer. The sounds of children on the Lawn during Halloween. The Chapel's bells. The cheers at games, no matter what the sport. And the name of Yeardeley Love.”

Retrieved from UVa Office of Major Events / Final Exercises webpage  
<http://www.virginia.edu/majorevents/finals/speeches/10speech.html>

## University Marks One Year Since Death of Yearley Love

May 3, 2011 — The joy of a University of Virginia graduation was tempered last year with the recent, painful loss of Yearley Love, who should have walked the Lawn with her classmates.

Love, a fourth-year student and member of the lacrosse team, died last May 3. George Hugely V, a former U.Va. student and lacrosse player, is charged with her murder. In the wake of Love's death, many at the University began searching for the answers to two difficult questions: How could this have happened? And how do we keep it from happening in the future?

U.Va.'s new president, Teresa A. Sullivan, had not yet taken office when she received the news of Love's death. Though she was still at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, she began to think about how the University community could gain understanding and insight into the tragedy and commit to a safer future. And so "A Day of Dialogue: Toward a Caring Community" was scheduled for Sept. 24 to ask the questions: Are we a caring community? Am I my sister and brother's keeper? "Today we give voice to our mourning and grief for the suffering and death that have occurred here in Charlottesville, and that continues to occur in every corner of the world," Sullivan said during her opening remarks. "At the same time, we want to channel our grief into energy – energy we can use to begin the work of building a stronger, more caring community." Sullivan recalled recently that she was advised that such an event wouldn't be possible so soon after the start of the school year, and that no one would participate. In fact, 1,500 students, faculty, staff, parents and community members registered and many hundreds participated.

As U.Va. marks the first anniversary of Love's death, the University community can look back on a year of efforts and initiatives to further ensure the safety and security of all of its members. One of the most prominent is the student-initiated Let's Get Grounded campaign, which offers bystander intervention training. It grew out of discussions over the summer among student leaders, who identified bystander reluctance as a main reason people don't intervene when they see someone in trouble. The group adapted the Step Up! Program, which began in 2007 after U.Va.'s Gordie Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse Education partnered with the University of Arizona's Becky Bell, an associate athletics director at the University of Arizona and head of the department's life skills program, and the University of California-Riverside in creating a National Collegiate Athletic Association program for student-athletes. "We've now trained about 1,500 students, faculty and staff," said Sharon Zanti, one of the members. "The great thing about the program is that the material is so easily shaped to be beneficial no matter what issue you're talking about." Students and staff members conduct the training, which will continue this summer and into the future. Zanti said Let's Get Grounded also gave two presentations for Human Resources. The group is looking into other ways to reach more faculty and staff, she said, and its members continue to work with Susan Bruce and Jason Shaffer, director and assistant director of the Gordie Center.

From the Day of Dialogue grew Dialogue Across UVA, which encouraged faculty, staff and students to join discussion groups that met regularly during the spring semester to sustain the dialogue that began in September. Members of the organization

Sustained Dialogue, which has student and faculty groups that meet all year, organized five new groups – each a mix of students, staff and faculty – to discuss a specific topic: race, religion, socioeconomic class, violence or gender/sexual identity. Facilitator Ryan Deneault, a rising third-year student and member of Sustained Dialogue, said, "Every person in our group on the last day of dialogue could say they had met someone new, learned something new and had something to take back to their own section of the University community. That alone is a powerful action, the impact of knowledge and communication."

"The dialogue groups went very well," said Pemberton Heath, a third-year student who was one of the principal organizers. "Participants expressed very positive feedback, and all facilitators expressed that their groups had become quite close." Heath, who will submit a full report after final exams, said the next step will be to offer more dialogue groups to accommodate those who expressed interest, as well as feedback from the first session. "We had nearly 200 sign up this year and could only accommodate about 75," she said. "We will probably explore different topics, and we hope to pilot a group that incorporates Charlottesville community members in a University/town relations dialogue." She added that, although Dialogue Across UVA wasn't formed specifically in response to Love's death, "I believe that Yeardeley's death caused many people at U.Va. to become more invested in the health and wellbeing of one another and their community. This project was designed to give them an opportunity to do so."

Other measures taken since Love's death include:

- Patricia M. Lampkin, vice president and chief student affairs officer, sent a memo during the second week of the fall semester to all faculty with information about identifying not only students in distress, but also those who may be in abusive relationships.
- A new mechanism was implemented to collect criminal arrest and convictions information from students on an annual basis. Students receive a prompt the first time they log into the NetBadge system, and they can't register for classes without completing the form. After spring break, students were reminded of this requirement and alerted that the Day of Dialogue website is live with resources and follow-up information.
- Student conduct records transitioned in October to a system that provides better tracking and reporting, more robust data and increased document storage capacity, improved security options and, when appropriate, information-sharing capabilities. Approximately 250 individuals, including all deans on call, dean of students' administrative staff and resident staff, are using the new system.
- Lampkin contacted 70 higher education institutions in Virginia requesting "courtesy calls" when they learn of improper or criminal conduct on the part of a U.Va. student while in their area. Thirteen institutions confirmed their support; as of December 2010, one such notification had been received. The heightened awareness of safety and willingness to report incidents led to a number of reports during the fall semester of attacks and attempted attacks on U.Va. students, particularly near the Corner. "We are fairly certain that students are calling us more often and reporting incidents more frequently – something we want and encourage them to do," U.Va. Police Chief Michael Gibson said in October. "What's more important than the numbers themselves is the

general feeling out in the community that crime against students has increased." With that backdrop, the University expanded late-night bus service and the SafeRide program, and University Police offered women training in defending against rape, in addition to regular self-defense classes.

"It takes a lot of work to make a community a better place, and every person has a role in doing that," said Patricia M. Lampkin, vice president and chief student affairs officer. "Students took the lead and have made important progress this year. I foresee that progress continuing as new leaders fill their shoes."

Retrieved from *UVa Today* website

[Message from President Sullivan] Re: Upcoming Trial  
February 1, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

The trial of George Huguely will begin in Charlottesville Circuit Court on Monday, February 6. As the trial gets under way and the national spotlight focuses on our community once again, nearly two years after the death of Yeardley Love, the effort to create a caring community that we began with the Day of Dialogue will become more important than ever.

As the trial proceeds, details emanating from the courtroom may create or compound emotional distress for our students, faculty, and staff, and demonstrating support for one another will become especially important. During this period, I encourage you to use the resources available at the University. These resources include Office of the Dean of Students, Counseling and Psychological Services in Student Health, the Faculty and Employee Assistance Program, and other services. Some 150 reporters are registered to cover the trial, so we will also see a significant media presence arrive in Charlottesville in the next few days. Reporters will likely seek out interviews with students, faculty, and staff members. Students will soon receive a detailed message from Pat Lampkin, VP for Student Affairs, describing the many resources available for personal support and advice for dealing with media inquiries. This will be available at <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa>.

As the trial draws near, we have an opportunity to learn about criminal law and procedure in Virginia. U.Va. Law Professor Anne M. Coughlin will lead a discussion tomorrow evening, February 2, at 6 p.m., in Wilson 402. The program, co-sponsored by several student organizations, is open to all students, faculty, and staff. I hope you will attend and encourage others to attend, especially students. More details are available at <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/coughlin.html>.

Nearly two years ago, our University community came together to grieve the loss of Yeardley Love. The coming days will be a challenging period for our community, as the trial of George Huguely begins and the details of Yeardley's death re-emerge. We will leave the judgment in this case to the justice system, and direct our energy toward creating a truly caring community. Doing this will be the best tribute to Yeardley's life and her memory.

Terry Sullivan  
President

Retrieved from <http://www.virginia.edu/president/speeches/12/message120201.html>.

Date: February 1, 2012  
To: All U.Va. Students  
From: Patricia M. Lampkin, Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer  
Re: Community Resources -- Upcoming Trial

Dear Students:

On Monday, Feb. 6, the trial of George Huguely will begin in Charlottesville Circuit Court. As the trial gets under way and attention focuses on our community once again, nearly two years after the death of Yeardeley Love, our efforts to build a caring community will become more important than ever. One reason for this message is to outline ways in which we can support one another during this time.

As the trial draws near, we also have an opportunity to learn about criminal law and procedure in Virginia. Toward this end, President Sullivan has asked U.Va. Law Professor Anne M. Coughlin to lead a discussion tomorrow evening, Feb. 2, at 6 p.m. in Wilson 402. The program is open to all students, faculty and staff. I hope you will attend. Several student organizations, including Student Council, the Honor Committee, University Judiciary Committee, University Programs Council and the law school's Student Bar Association are cosponsoring the event. More details are available at <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/coughlin.html>.

As the trial proceeds, details emanating from the courtroom may create or compound emotional distress for students or others with whom you live, socialize or have classes. We are fortunate to live in a safe community, where mutual respect and concern are the norm rather than the exception. The support and concern that you demonstrate toward other members of the community will be even more important during the next two to three weeks.

If you sense that someone in your circle – a friend, classmate, hallmate, apartment-mate – needs attention or help, then we encourage you to call upon the resources available here at the University. It is important not to ignore those around us who may be experiencing difficulty.

Resources available to you will vary depending on the situation and who is involved. The following is intended to serve as a reminder of existing resources and where to find help (phone numbers are listed at the end of this message):

If you witness or suspect an immediate threat or violence . . .  
Do not hesitate to call the Police at 911.

If you are concerned about a friend, classmate or acquaintance...  
Approach the individual if you are comfortable doing so and ask how you can help.  
Alternatively, talk with your Resident Adviser or a member of the Office of the Dean of Students staff.

If you personally need support. . .

Do not hesitate to ask for help. You may want to start with your resident adviser, faculty adviser, association dean or another trusted individual.

You can always call the Office of the Dean of Students or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services. You may start there if you don't know where else to turn.

If you are approached by the media. . .

You are free to decide whether you want to talk to the media. If you decide to be interviewed, remember that you are speaking as an individual, not in an official University capacity.

Know that the University will not be issuing any statements during the trial.

The Office of Public Affairs is working to accommodate members of the press on Grounds, but has also asked them to be respectful of the daily routines of students, faculty and staff.

If you have questions or comments about the media, contact the Office of Public Affairs.

Thank you for supporting each other as we enter a challenging time for the University community. Please do not hesitate to call upon my office if you have questions, concerns or if you identify ways in which we can be of additional support to you.

#### PHONE NUMBERS

Police: 911

Office of Dean of Students: 924.7133; 243.3326 after hours

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 924.5556 or 243.5150; 972.7004 after hours

Faculty and Employee Assistance Program: 243-2643

Public Affairs: 924.1400

All area code 434.

Retrieved from <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/communications/11-12/020112-upcoming-trial.html>

Special Event

“ORDER IN THE COURT: A REAL-LIFE LOOK AT CRIMINAL PROCEDURE”

Feb. 2, 6 to 7 p.m., Wilson 402. Remote viewing available in Wilson 301.

Speaker: Professor of Law Anne M. Coughlin

In order to help students prepare for and understand what may happen during the trial of George Huguely starting Feb. 6, President Sullivan has asked Professor Anne M. Coughlin to give an informative presentation that goes beyond the sensationalism of criminal trial coverage and explains the facts about criminal law and procedure in Virginia. There will be time for questions and answers. After the program, refreshments will be served in the lobby outside Wilson 402.

This event is co-sponsored by Student Council, Honor Committee, University Judiciary Committee, University Programs Council and Student Bar Association.

For more information, please call (434) 924-7133 or e-mail [eramo@virginia.edu](mailto:eramo@virginia.edu).

Retrieved from <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/coughlin.html>.

Source: Anne Coughlin, UVa Law Professor

George Huguely Trial: Defense and Prosecution Rest Their Cases

By Christina Ng and Cleopatra Andreadis

Charlottesville, Va., Feb. 18, 2012

"I think the jury will be persuaded that [Huguely] engaged in conduct that caused her death and there was some sufficient culpability," University of Virginia law professor Anne Coughlin told ABCNews.com. "The issue is how culpable. How culpable was his mental state?"

"We know that he was in that room, that there was some conduct that caused death and the issue is what was in his mind?" Coughlin said.

Although Huguely, 24, was charged with first degree murder, along with five other charges, Coughlin anticipates that the judge will present the jurors with instructions that include a menu of options that include second-degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and voluntary manslaughter.

Based on what Huguely is ultimately charged with, he faces anywhere from one year to life in prison.

"So you can see the stakes involved for both sides," Coughlin said. "It's huge. And it all comes down to his mental state."

Retrieved from: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/george-huguely-trial-defense-prosecution-rest-cases/story?id=15744129&page=2#.T0FxtoePW4R>.

Statement from President Sullivan on the Huguely trial  
February 22, 2012

Prior to the trial of George Huguely, I said the University would withhold any comments until the trial had concluded. The jury now has rendered its verdict and a young man – a former member of our community – has been found guilty for the death of fellow student Yeardley Love.

As Professor Anne Coughlin reminded us on Feb. 2, the conclusion of a trial like this may bring a momentary sense of justice or retribution, but our judicial system can never restore to a family what it has lost. Yeardley's family, teammates, sorority sisters and friends — indeed all of us at the University — continue to feel the loss of this promising young woman. It remains now to each of us to commit to caring for one another and, when we see someone in trouble, to having the courage to intercede and offer assistance.

Our sympathy and compassion go to the Love family, as well as to the Huguely family, as they face the future and their personal grief.

-- Teresa A. Sullivan, University of Virginia president

Retrieved from <http://www.virginia.edu/president/speeches/12/message120222.html>.

APPENDIX C: Semantic analysis of UVa official statements

**STAGE ONE:  
May 3-May 23, 2010**

**Yeardeley Love cluster**

*Potential*  
*Talent*  
*Promise*  
*Uncommon*  
*Bright*  
*Goodness*  
*Greatness*  
*Future*  
*Personality*  
*Leader*  
*Human*  
*Dedicated*  
*Angel*  
*Natural*

**University reaction I**

*Sympathy*  
*Loss*  
*Grief*  
*Mourn*  
*Support*  
*Healing*  
*Appreciate[d]*  
*Comfort[ing]*  
*Sad*  
*Thoughtful*  
*Honor*  
*Coping*  
*Counseling*  
*Dignified*  
*Unity*

**Corrective action cluster**

*Recognize*  
*Training*  
*Violence*  
*Relationship*  
*Abuse*  
*Bystander*

**University reaction II**

*Shock*  
*Stress[ful]*  
*Anguish*  
*Anger*  
*Terrible*  
*Traumatic*  
*Violent*  
*Difficult*  
*Ache*  
*Death*  
*Murdered*  
*Judgments*  
*Evidence*

**STAGE TWO:  
February 1-  
February 23, 2012**

**Technical/legal cluster**

*Resources x2*  
*Procedure*  
*Criminal law*  
*Judgment*  
*Justice x2*

**Emotional cluster**

*Caring community x2*  
*Community x 11*  
*Distress*  
*Emotional*  
*Support*  
*Personal*  
*Memory*  
*Life*  
*Death*  
*Difficulty*  
*Concern*  
*Fortunate*  
*Help*  
*Attention*  
*Loss*  
*Family*  
*Sympathy*  
*Compassion*  
*Grief*  
*Promising*

**Active cluster**

*Energy*  
*Tribute*  
*Opportunity*  
*Challenging*  
*Courage*  
*Commit*  
*Respect[ful]*  
*Assistance*  
*Intercede*

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### EDUCATION

*Master of Arts, Communication* (August 2012)  
Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC  
Thesis: "A Values-Affirmation Model for Higher Education Crisis Communication"

*Bachelor of Arts, English* (May 2010)  
Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, NC  
Honors Thesis: "The Interconnectedness of Theme and Style in *The Sun Also Rises*"

### EMPLOYMENT

*Graduate Teaching Assistant* (Aug. 2010—May 2012)  
Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC  
Introduction to Criticism, Public Speaking, Research Methods, Practices of Citizenship

*Bartender* (Apr. 2011 – present)  
Finnigan's Wake, Winston-Salem, NC

*Resident Assistant* (Aug. 2007—May 2009)  
Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, NC

*Receptionist and Office Assistant* (May—Aug. 2008)  
The Law Office of Amber St. John, Smyrna, TN

*Peer Tutor: Economics* (Jan.—May 2008)  
Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, NC

### AWARDS

Belmont Abbey Student of the Year, 2010  
"Excellence in Literary Studies," BAC English Department 2009

### SERVICE

*Wake Forest University*  
Department Representative, Graduate Student Association 2011

*Belmont Abbey College*  
SGA Senior Council Vice-President 2010  
Representative, Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty 2010  
Search Committee for Dean of Residential Life 2010  
Freshman Orientation Leader 2009  
Head Editor, *The Crusader* 2008  
SGA Freshman Class Vice-President 2006