CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities, like other organizations, occasionally face crises. These crisis situations, defined as “unpredictable events that can disrupt an organization's operations,” pose threats to organizational reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, p. 166). Reputation is best understood as the collective perceptions of an institution held by its constituents (Alessandri, Yang, & Kinsey, 2006). This thesis applies case study's ability to find and explain causal relationships to the intersection of crisis communication, marketing, and higher education (Yin, 2003). Using crisis response and business performance measurement literature, this study analyzes media portrayal of Southern Illinois University's response to prolonged threats against its reputation.

Southern Illinois University frequently has faced negative headlines the past decade since former Chancellor Walter Wendler came under fire for opposing extension of benefits to same-sex partners of employees in August 2004 (“Board is Asked,” 2004). Wendler later was accused of plagiarizing part of the university's strategic plan (Bartlett, 2007). President Glenn Poshard in November 2006 demoted Wendler to a faculty position (“Rundown of Recent Controversies,” 2012). Poshard received headlines in 2005 as the only candidate for the then-vacant university presidency to publicly voice desire for the position. In 2007, he was accused of plagiarizing parts of his doctoral dissertation at SIU. An investigation ruled he accidentally misattributed some portions and he was allowed to correct the document. Poshard stayed in the news the following year by firing Wendler's replacement, Fernando Trevino, over alleged poor job
performance. In 2009, a retired SIU employee criticized the university for using Tedrick Insurance Agency, the company owned by then-Board President Roger Tedrick. Insurance in question was for contractors building new university athletic facilities. In 2011, Poshard's granddaughter was one of 24 students offered a full-ride academic scholarship to attend SIU, but she chose Xavier University instead (Cohen, 2011). Also in 2011, SIU's faculty union went on strike for a week in the fall. The strike's background dates to April 2010 negotiations which in April 2011 resulted in the imposition of a contract against faculty wishes (Tucker, 2011). Faculty went on strike November 3-9, 2011 (“Strike Ends at SIU's Carbondale Campus,” 2011).

Local media reports of SIU's crisis responses show how the university's attempts to shape public opinion were received by media and disseminated to the public. This process of shaping people's perceptions of the world, done by organizations and media, is known as framing (Entman, 1993). While media are the primary agents that shape public opinion, a cycle sometimes occurs in which media interpretations of events are shaped by audiences' beliefs and attitudes (Scheufele, 1999). These interactions provide public relations practitioners ample opportunities to shape appropriate messages that are relayed by media to the public (Miller & Reichert, 2001). This thesis analyzes SIU's crisis responses as shaped by the local media as part of the effort to gauge effectiveness of the university's messaging during troubled times.

Successful crisis communication and image restoration may be indirectly assessed through examining changes in the university’s key performance indicators, which are tangible measures of an organization's health (Abujudeh, Kaewlai, Asfaw, & Thrall, 2010). Like counterparts in the business world, academic administrators measure success through a series of tangible measures. Kennedy (2010) listed 72 KPIs used in higher education. The list comprises
measures for academics, finances, research, campus, and community factors. SIU's KPIs were analyzed to see if the university's specific crisis responses, as appeared in the media, had any impact on these measures. Unlike most crisis response literature surveyed, this thesis takes a longitudinal look at SIU's reputation management and repair efforts reported in local media through the lenses of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and Image Restoration Theory. Using similar language, both theories are concerned with matching crises with responses to rebuild damaged reputations. According to Coombs (1995), appropriate crisis responses fall within five categories (nonexistence, distance, ingratiation, mortification, and suffering) based on control and purpose. Benoit's (1997) Image Restoration Theory similarly offers a continuum of crisis responses to help an organization in crisis regain a positive reputation: denial, evasion, reduction of offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the change in SIU's key performance indicators relative to media reporting of SIU's crisis response and university marketing efforts. A longitudinal approach is used to add context to the crises analyzed here. This literature review summarizes crisis response typologies discussed in Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Image Restoration theory. It also addresses the common KPIs important to universities' internal and external publics and media framing.

Media framing

The concept of media framing shapes discussion of crisis perception and affected stakeholders' response to organizational attempts to cope with crisis. Framing refers to the concepts by which people make sense of the world (Reese, 2001). The frames chosen by people, organizations, or media make certain details more important to shape how people think about an event or idea (Entman, 1993). Framing theory originated in studies of media but has practical applications to public relations. According to Scheufele (1999), media participate in circular framing cycles in which media and audiences shape the other's interpretation of events. In this cycle, media present stories and opinions based on cues from sociocultural factors while the audience frame is shaped by the media. From the public relations perspective, Hallahan (1999) notes framing is necessary to the profession because of its emphasis on shaping opinion through relationships with stakeholders. Public relations practitioners can utilize relationships with the public to monitor message effectiveness. As opportunities arise, public relations practitioners
can thus intensify messaging that earns favorable responses or alters messages that do not receive positive reactions (Miller & Reichert, 2001).

When crisis strikes an organization, framing occurs in a two-step process to shape public opinion. First, organizations react to crisis and attempt to appease public opinion by influencing media coverage. Similar to Coombs and Holladay's (1996) Situational Crisis Communication Theory, Huang (2006) suggests organizations in crisis can positively impact media framing by selecting crisis responses that match the situation. Huang says denial is most likely to receive positive media coverage for circumstances in which there is no proof of wrongdoing, excuses are best for situations in which an organization lacks control over the triggering event, and admissions of guilt or justifications of action are best when a crisis was caused by controllable, intentional factors. Once crisis response strategies have been processed by reporters, those reporters shape messages which then affect public opinion and reputation. When media coverage is highly negative over several years, public opinion of a university can decline over several years as a result of prolonged highly negative media coverage (Kim, Carvalho, & Cooksey, 2007). In a setting of negative feelings toward the university, Kim et al. suggested the public opinion harmed supportive actions toward the university. This thesis measures supportive behaviors as indicators of reputation. Therefore, the study examined how media presented the crisis and analyzed media's frames in the context of Situational Crisis Communication Theory.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Situational Crisis Communication Theory, one of two dominant understandings of crisis response, is rooted in attribution theory's assertion that an organization's stakeholders will judge who or what is responsible for a crisis (Coombs, 2007). As a result, an organization's reputation
is more likely to suffer if the public blames the organization for a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). The public determines where to place blame by analyzing four aspects of causation: stability, external control, personal control, and locus (McAuley, Duncan, & Russell, 1992). Stability observes how often an event's cause occurs. An unstable event is a frequent occurrence while a stable event is a rare occurrence. External control means the cause of the crisis was beyond the organization's control such as natural disasters. Personal control indicates the level of a person's power to control a crisis-triggering event while locus links the triggering event's root cause to a person's action or a situation. Coombs and Holladay (1996) developed four crisis categories based on attribution assessment. An organization has more responsibility for a crisis if the crisis cause is stable, with low external control, and contains high personal control and locus. In other words, an organization will be deemed responsible for a crisis if the organization has a history of mistakes and people without direct ties to the organization can't impact events while people directly connected have the power to control the situation. On the other hand, an organization will be held less responsible if crisis is rare (unstable), the event's cause and control aren't directly tied to the organization, and the situation is caused by an event beyond human control.
This discussion of control and intentionality leads to a four-category crisis typology of which each category requires different response strategies, according to Coombs and Holladay (1996): accidents (internal control, unintentional act), transgressions (internal control, intentional act), faux pas (external control, unintentional act), and terrorism (external control, intentional act). Faux pas, which may not necessarily be crises, should be met with efforts to prove no crisis exists. In accidents or terrorism, organizations should seek to distance themselves from the event by focusing on the fact the organization didn't intentionally cause harm. Transgressions, by virtue of the intentional deed, require an organization to deal with the damage, repair reputation harm, and demonstrate that it is correcting its mistakes. The two crises this thesis analyzes are primarily the latter category. In one, former Southern Illinois University Chancellor Walter Wendler drew criticism and eventually was demoted for his social beliefs and plagiarism charges. In the other, SIU faculty went on strike for a week after a year of failed contract negotiations. Both of these cases involve internal publics who intentionally made the decisions that caused controversy.

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Fig 2.1
Coombs and Holladay (2006) expanded their discussion by grouping responses into clusters of tactics to deny crisis existence, diminish crisis, and deal with crisis damage. The deny cluster includes tactics of attacking the accuser, denying the crisis, and scapegoating. The diminish cluster includes excuses and justification. The deal cluster includes ingratiation, showing concern, showing compassion, expressing regret, and offering an apology. To match responses with crisis types, faux pas should be matched with denial, accidents should be addressed with the diminish cluster, transgressions, and terrorism should be met with the deal cluster. If organizations' crisis responses fit within SCCT's framework, the embattled organizations generally exit crisis stage with less reputation damage than had they stepped outside the guidelines (Coombs & Holladay, 1996).

**Image Restoration**

As previously noted, Image Restoration Theory describes a range of strategies for rebuilding a damaged reputation. According to Benoit (1995), a central goal of communication is keeping a positive reputation. This theory notes people (and organizations) are conscious that the magnitude of negative situations influences the scope of potential reputation damage. The greater the mishap, the greater the potential harm. Benoit and Pang (2008) offered five response categories to counter the reputational harm: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and apology. In denial, an organization may say it didn't do the alleged wrong (simple denial) or shift the blame. Several responses fall within evasion of responsibility. Under that strategy, an organization may exercise provocation (claim a deed was in response to another action), defeasibility (the organization lacked needed skills or information to act), say the incident was an accident. Or, it may claim the offensive deed was performed with
good intentions. Six actions comprise the reducing offensiveness strategy: bolstering (emphasize an organization's good characteristics), minimization (downplay seriousness of action), differentiation (compare to more serious incidents), transcendence (suggest there are bigger issues to worry about), attack the accuser (attempt to discredit the accusers), and compensation (pay victims). Finally, an organization may take corrective action or apologize for the act (mortification).

The use of these responses is affected by crisis development and its relationship to those affected (Benoit, 1995). All image restoration strategies are impacted by a situation's proximity and salience to affected publics. For example, events on another continent may weigh less on the American public than an incident at home. A delay in admitting guilt when a company is knowingly culpable may lead to two vulnerabilities: one for not confessing immediately and a later one for stonewalling. Scapegoating is a viable response in a crisis that can logically be blamed on an outside cause.

According to Holtzhausen and Roberts (2009), issue stage sometimes impacts the tone of media reports as well. For example, limited early attempts to frame a crisis through image restoration strategies was correlated to negative media coverage during the 2003 U.S. Air Force Academy sexual abuse controversy. Coverage shifted toward a neutral tone as Air Force officials learned more about the issues and put forth more tactical explanations. The Air Force's positive, proactive framing through defeasibility, bolstering, and mortification strategies frequently produced balanced or positive media coverage. By the time media coverage waned at the end of the crisis, Air Force officials had succeeded in utilizing image restoration strategies to generate positive coverage. On the other hand, attempts to mortify the crisis led to negative coverage.
Additionally, different strategies may be required to respond to different target audiences. Liu, Austin, and Jin (2011) offer the Social Mediated Crisis Communication model, which suggests organizations should respond to different publics through different information channels depending on expected reactions. Their study showed publics were more likely to believe defensive and evasion responses when information came straight from an organization. Supportive responses were best received through third parties while accommodative strategies were most often believed when learned through word-of-mouth and least likely to be believed when they directly came from an organization.

At the time of the SIU crises, local newspapers were the primary means of communication between the university and regional public. Because organizations, including universities, rely on media to influence public opinion (Huang, 2006), this thesis examines local media coverage to determine what crisis responses were presented to the public.

This leads to the first research question:

*RQ 1: According to media coverage of SIU's crises, to which categories of SCCT do SIU's responses belong?*

**Reputation and image**

Reputation, another key concept to this study, is a term that sometimes causes confusion because of similar discussions of image and identity (Abratt, 1989). Dichter (1985) defines image as “the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others” (p. 75). Alessandri, Yang, and Kinsey (2006) similarly define reputation as the “collective representations that the university's multiple constituents — various internal and external constituents, including the media — hold of the university over time” (p. 261). These projected representations are seen as
manifestations of an organization's inner identity (Fombrun & van Riel, 1997). By referencing the numerous stakeholders affected by organizational reputation, Fombrun and van Riel hint at the complex nature of image or reputation. Images, as Dichter (1985) notes, constantly change. In addition, reputation depends on the audience and its lenses (Dichter, 1985). In the case of universities, students and adults not affiliated with the schools assess reputation on differing levels of academic, athletic, and peer factors (Arpan, Raney, & Zivnuska, 2003). Stakeholders' assessments of an university's reputation give credence to the cliché “perception is reality” in that people form opinions and act on cognizance of a university's image, not the reality of university performance (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

Though academic institutions serve many stakeholders, most scholarly research focuses on understanding which reputation factors influence students, alumni, the general public, and administrators. Students and adult non-students list athletic success as a factor in their perceptions of schools (Arpan et al., 2003). Goidel and Hamilton (2006) took this a step further, suggesting it is an “unequivocal yes” that the general public links academic reputation to athletic success (p. 855). Students, alumni, administrators, and the general public also value academic factors and prominence, albeit in different forms. For example, current and prospective students place high value on schools' quality or prestige (Sung & Yang, 2008; Trusheim, 1990). In 2006, survey data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) showed 57 percent of college freshmen viewed academic reputation as a “very important” factor to their college choice (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007). Though only 16 percent of those surveyed considered national magazine rankings “very important” to college choice, that number increased 56 percent over 12 years the Higher Education Research Institute had asked about magazine
rankings. Alumni gauge academic reputation through their alma mater's ability to provide them tools to acquire their first job placement and find career success (Brown & Gobeli, 1993). University administrators, on the other hand, value rankings (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010) and measures such as cost, diversity, faculty quality, endowment size, and campus morale (Theus, 1993).

**Key performance indicators**

Literature from both the business and academic disciplines discusses the means by which organizations work to measure the level of support they receive from the public. Organizations, including universities, use their positive reputation to boost shareholders' supportive behaviors (Fombrun & van Riel, 2003). Those who think favorably of a university are likely to demonstrate that support by speaking and acting positively toward the institution (Kim, Carvalho, & Cooksey, 2007; Sung & Yang, 2008). Supportive acts in an academic setting take the form of enrollment in a school, attendance at athletic events, donations, and a wide range of other deeds. These behaviors are known across academic disciplines as key performance indicators (KPIs): a measurable sign of an organization's health (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007). Higher education also uses the concept and language of KPIs to measure reputation or value because institutional quality must be quantified through measures of size, course offerings, faculty excellence, diversity, or other factors (Theus, 1993). Thus, a university's task is complicated by virtue of its many constituents, which may include “current students, alumni, parents, prospective students, donors, staff, faculty, residents of the local community, sports team fans, and advisory boards” (Len-Rios, 2010, p. 269).

The previous discussion of university constituents' understandings of reputation applies
here because universities in crisis are forced to maintain or rebuild reputation in the eyes of multiple stakeholders who focus on different KPIs (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). In academics, seven broad categories of perceptions shape reputations. These are: overall feel, academic image, teaching and research emphasis, education quality, environmental factors, finances, and athletics (Kazoleas, Kim, & Moffitt, 2001). Of these categories, external publics place more reputational value on academic rankings, aesthetics, and infrastructure development than other categories. Astin (1970) confirmed the importance of enrollment and undergraduate selectivity as measures of academic rigor and visibility to outsiders. As a result of the complex stakeholder relationships, administrators monitor a lengthy list of KPIs, many of which correspond to the earlier discussion.

*U.S. News & World Report*’s annual college and university rankings provide ground from which to discuss KPI’s important to most stakeholder groups. *U.S. News and World Report* rankings have a noticeable impact on admissions at national universities (Bowman & Bastedo, 2008). Data from 1997-2004 showed schools that moved into or out of the magazine’s top tier reported application consequences the year following a rank change. In other words, SAT scores, percent of applicants in the top 10 percent of their graduating class, and the total number of applications increased following universities’ improvement in the rankings. Similarly, Griffith and Rask (2007) found students were more likely to attend liberal arts colleges and national universities with higher *U.S. News* rankings, with the trend most noticeable for universities near the top of the rankings. These observations are consistent with the Higher Education Research Institute’s (2007) findings that more than half of college-bound students value academic reputation and they increasingly value magazine ratings.
Additionally, academic reputation research shows an inverse link between the presence of minority students on campus and campus academic marks. Though administrators value diversity-related KPIs (Terkla, 2011), increased minority enrollment led to decreased SAT scores, number of students who finished in the top 10 percent of their graduating class, and total number of applications (Bowman & Bastedo, 2008). If the number of minority students increases over time, Bowman and Bastedo hypothesized white prospective students would sense the trend, notice declining academic rankings, and would attend schools at less diverse institutions with higher academic marks. In other words, attempts to create a more diverse campus might result in “white flight” that harms other KPIs.

Multiple stakeholders also value athletic performance's functional role as a KPI. Though studies offer conflicting reports of the actual effect of successful sports on academic data, Goidel and Hamilton (2006) found a university's absolute reputation and reputation compared to other universities was linked to athletic performance regardless of actual academic quality. This corresponds with Toma and Cross' (1998) discovery that prospective student applications often rose and stayed high for several years after a school won the NCAA Division I football or basketball national championship. However, similar correlation studies by Frank (2004) and Rishe (2003) found little connection between athletic and academic success.

Last, alumni giving appears to be linked to alumni perceptions of their alma mater's reputation on a couple of levels. Athletic success, in addition to predicting reputation perception, leads to increases in university endowments and alumni giving (Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994). Probability of alumni giving also is correlated to universities' academics, as alumni who credited educational experiences for their career successes were likely to support schools financially
Change in organizations' KPIs can be linked to reputation change and crisis. As Fombrun and Shanley (1990) discussed, competitive balance in an industry can be altered by improving reputation to enhance customer loyalty and financial support. The same is true of academia, where university reputation is linked to measurable supportive behaviors by university constituents (Sung & Yang, 2008). Crisis threatens organization reputation in both professions because crisis potentially endangers profits, customers, investors, or partnerships (Brinson & Benoit, 1996).

This leads to the final research questions:

*RQ 2: How did SIU's KPIs change during crises?*

*RQ 3: What KPIs and reputation markers were prominently communicated in university publications during crises?*
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The case study method was chosen to analyze changes in SIU's key performance indicators in light of media reports of SIU's crisis responses and university marketing efforts. Case study method is predominantly utilized in many crisis communication studies because it allows for examination of public relations strategies and comprise one-third of such studies (Cutler, 2004). Case studies investigate “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). By virtue of this, the method is well-suited for answering the “how” and “why” questions posed by this thesis (Yin, 2003). In this thesis, SIU's crises were analyzed by textual content analysis of SIU marketing and spokesperson statements as reported in local newspapers and qualitative analysis of changes in key performance indicators during the period these crises were frequently mentioned in the media.

This case study of SIU crises aims to explain links between crisis, response, and key performance indicators (KPIs). To add context to previous crisis response literature that focused on short-term crisis response and reputation change, this study focused on the effects of a series of crises and SIU responses as reported in local newspapers. Therefore, the whole timespan (August 1, 2004-May 31, 2012) was monitored as context for specific response to examine a full school year in which crisis responses could have evolved. For more detailed analysis, the Wendler controversy (August 1, 2004-November 30, 2006) and faculty strike (April 1, 2010-November 30, 2011) were examined in depth to observe crisis response as it appeared in two
local newspapers. These two incidents were the most prominent events that generated media coverage for an extended period of time. The Wendler involved incendiary social and academic matters of gay marriage (“Board is Asked,” 2004) and plagiarism (Bartlett, 2007). The faculty contract negotiations and strike were controversial in the context of negative public attitudes toward academia and unions in a state where it has been struggling to fund its universities. Also, the strike was the only incident that disrupted the university's education function. These specific dates captured likely pre-crisis messages and post-resolution messages. The faculty strike timeline included the end of one union contract in 2010 and more than a year of failed efforts to secure a long-term deal.

While the bulk of this study describes both SCCT and image restoration, the content analysis focused on image restoration. Image restoration was used because its five response categories are easier to differentiate. It also provided detailed strategies for each response, which was then judged based on SCCT.

**Content analysis**

*Response typologies*

To address RQ 1 and RQ 2, a content analysis scanned SIU statements and all related articles in *The Southern Illinoisan* and *Daily Egyptian* for image restoration strategies. *The Southern Illinoisan* is the Carbondale, Illinois-based regional newspaper and the *Daily Egyptian* is SIU's student paper. These were the two media outlets located in Carbondale with focused coverage of the university.

The content analysis covered the Wendler (August 1, 2004-November 30, 2006) and strike (April 1, 2010-November 30, 2011) crises. Searches of the newspaper websites on these
crises yielded approximately 40 articles to code for the Wendler crisis and 90 articles to code for the strike. The coding was conducted by two individuals (the researcher and another coder) and intercoder reliability was measured in Krippendorff's alpha with a target 0.8 alpha as recommended by Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, and Bracken (2002). The unit of analysis for image repair strategy coding was the sentence. As suggested by Neundorff (2002), the coders worked through a pretest of 13 articles (10 percent) of the sample to assess the intercoder reliability. Discussions over disagreements and codebook revisions preceded another sample of 13 articles. Intercoder reliability for the first sample was .69 and .82 for the second, making the overall intercoder reliability .76. Though lower than the desired mark, Anderson (2012) noted a lower alpha of 0.7 generally would be acceptable.

Image repair strategies and definitions followed Benoit's (1997) five strategies as previously discussed. The strategies are defined as follows. See the appendix for a full description of terms.

- Denial: An organization refuses to take the blame for the crisis.
- Evasion of responsibility: An organization offers excuses for the crisis.
- Reducing offensiveness: An organization decreases the event's severity.
- Corrective action: Plan to solve or prevent the problem.
- Mortification: Apologize for the act.

RQ 3 was addressed by an analysis of key performance indicators and university attributes cited in university promotional materials. SIU's strategic marketing plan, SIU Foundation marketing, athletic marketing, and student recruitment marketing were analyzed from the fall of 2004 through the spring of 2012 (fiscal years 2005-2012). Because of the
absence of a unified marketing plan 2004-2008, no university-produced materials were directly available through SIU sources. Instead, Youtube videos from SIU's in-house video production company were analyzed 2007-2009.

**Performance indicators**

Performance indicators for fiscal years 2005-2012 provided the context by which to assess crisis responses. This long-term picture was compared to performance indicators isolated during the Wendler and faculty strike crises. This comparison enabled the study to compare major crises to lesser crises and times without crisis. SIU's performance indicators were measured from the fall semester of 2004 through the spring 2012 semester to address RQ 3. This covered the fiscal and academic years in question. Performance indicators chosen were quantitative measures derived from the previously discussed academic KPI discussion. As suggested by Bowman and Bastedo (2008), Grimes and Chressanthis (1993), and Toma and Cross (1998), the following KPIs were analyzed:

- Incoming freshman class profile (percentage in top 25 and 10 percent of high school class)
- Rankings in *U.S. News and World Report*
- Percentage of non-Caucasian students and faculty
- Team performance in SIU's primary sports: football and men's basketball
- Undergraduate enrollment
- Giving to the SIU Foundation

These indicators were tracked for change over time. Data during the Wendler and strike crises was compared with data from the contextual time.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the change in SIU's key performance indicators relative to media reporting of SIU's crisis response and university marketing efforts. In order to answer proposed research questions, two local newspapers' coverage of SIU's two prominent crises were analyzed. Additionally, SIU's key performance indicators were examined during and slightly after these crises to explore any possible changes in these indicators in relation to how image repair strategies were reported in these two newspapers. Finally, SIU's use of key performance indicators in promotional materials was examined. These analyses link reputation change with the framing of crisis response and university marketing appeals to reputation.

RQ 1: According to media coverage, to what extent did SIU follow SCCT responses?

Media reports of SIU's responses to the Wendler and faculty contract situations most frequently cited reduction of offensiveness and corrective action as SIU's chosen crisis responses. Reduction of offensiveness was referenced eight times in the Wendler crisis (in 13 articles that contained crisis responses) and 27 times in the faculty contract discussions. Corrective action was mentioned five times during the Wendler situation and 17 times during the faculty contract matter. The corrective action responses met Coombs' (1995) recommended responses of victim compensation and apology for transgressions and fit under image restoration's mortification and corrective action typologies. For example of corrective action, the September 28, 2005, Daily Egyptian reported that SIU officials backed the university's long-range plan to increase diversity on campus, with particular attention given gay, lesbian, bisexual,
and transgendered people (Zimmermann, 2005). This shows corrective action in discussion of the university's action steps to foster a more diverse campus and recommendations of further action. In addition to questions about Wendler's plagiarism, university president Glenn Poshard faced plagiarism charges and an SIU-Edwardsville professor was fired over similar claims. On July 23, 2006, *The Southern Illinoisan* quoted Poshard saying he didn't see “any equivalency” in comparing his situation to the others (Lee, 2006). This comparison fits image restoration's reduction of offensiveness response.

For the strike crisis (2010-2012), 46 out of the 86 articles contained crisis response strategies. Reduction of offensiveness was the most commonly reported strategy (27 times). This indicates media emphasized administrators' intent to reach a contract agreement with as little acrimony as possible. It is interesting to note nine of the 17 corrective action references were paired with reduction of offensiveness and five were paired with denial, which shows administrative efforts to shift crisis blame to the unions in light of various internal and external factors. For example of the reduction of offensiveness and corrective action pairing, the November 8, 2006, *The Southern Illinoisan* reported on Wendler's reassignment, which qualified as the university taking corrective action (Hale, 2006). Also in that article, Poshard told the newspaper the leadership change was not intended to be insulting of Wendler, but rather Poshard wanted a handpicked leadership team. This fits the reduction of offensiveness response as it emphasized issues of team leadership over matters of professionalism.

*RQ 2: How did SIU's targeted KPIs change during crises?*

Five of the nine key performance indicators studied during the eight-year crisis period improved throughout the analysis while three KPIs declined, and two remained steady. The
percentage of minority students and minority faculty improved over time, as did SIU Foundation contributions, number of students in the top 25 percent of their graduating class, and *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. On the other hand, undergraduate enrollment and the win percentage of the men's basketball and football teams declined. The trends indicate many of SIU’s key publics continued to support the university either because of or despite issues' framing in the media.

Based on number of KPIs that changed between years, 2006 was best year for the university as six KPIs increased from 2005, while two (enrollment and *U.S. News* rankings) declined and one (football record) didn't change. This occurred despite continuing headlines from the Wendler crisis. The 2009 school year also saw positive trends for SIU as five KPIs increased (minority students and faculty, students in the top 25 percent of their graduating classes, and the two sports), two decreased (enrollment and contributions), and two held steady (students in the top 10 percent of their graduating class and *U.S. News* ranking). The 2010 school year similarly saw gains in five KPIs (minority students and faculty, students in the top 10 and 25 percent of their graduating classes, and contributions).

In contrast, 2008 and 2011 showed the greatest year-to-year decreases with five KPI declines each year. These results fit with the assumption that crises hurt KPIs. With the Wendler situation resolved the winter of 2006 and Poshard plagiarism controversy in 2007, there is a possible link to the cumulative effect of crisis coverage in the media and KPI performance. The five KPIs to decrease from 2007 to 2008 were enrollment, students in the top 10 and 25 percent of graduating classes, contributions, and football win percentage. Changes from 2010 to 2011 also showed five KPI decreases, those being enrollment, students in the top 10 and 25 percent of
graduating classes, and the two sports. This change coincides with an increase in media
coverage of the faculty contract talks as opposed to the break in media coverage during the 2009
and 2010 KPI increases.

To put the data in a national context, enrollment at degree-granting institutions rose 37
percent 2000-2010, with gains in minority enrollment since the mid-1970s (“Digest of education
statistics,” 2011). However, enrollment at all two and four-year institutions declined 2011 and
2012, though four-year public school enrollments increased 1.6 percent in 2010 and 1.4 percent
in 2011 before a 2012 decrease of 0.6 percent (“Current term enrollment,” 2012). In comparison,
SIU's undergraduate enrollment declined while minority enrollment increased. Recent declines
were attributed students or potential students finding work in the improving economy
(Lederman, 2012). Charitable giving to universities and endowments of recent years showed
signs of returning to pre-2008 recession levels. Giving for the 2011 fiscal year reached $30.3
billion, which was about $1 billion shy of a 2008 peak (Kiley, 2012b). This marked an 8 percent
increase from 2010. Following the economic turbulence of 2008, giving declined 12 percent for
2009. At SIU, giving declined more than 50 percent from the 2007-2008 school year (Fiscal
Year 2008) to the 2009-2010 school year (Fiscal Year 2010) but increased 36 percent for 2010-
2011 (Fiscal Year 2011).

Regionally, four of SIU's competing schools saw enrollment gains and three saw financial
debtives over the period of this study. Southeast Missouri State University's enrollment jumped
25 percent in the analyzed period (Southeast Missouri State University, 2012a), while enrollment
increased 9 percent at the University of Illinois (University of Illinois, 2013), 6 percent at
Murray State University (Murray State University, 2010), and 2 percent at Illinois State
University (Illinois State University, 2012). Minority student enrollment also increased, with Southeast Missouri State's 144 percent jump (Southeast Missouri State University, 2012a) followed by a 42 percent increase at the University of Illinois (University of Illinois, 2013), 40 percent increase at Illinois State (Illinois State University, 2012), and 9 percent at Murray State (Murray State University, 2010). Despite these gains, giving at Illinois State dropped 20 percent (Illinois State University Advancement, 2012), giving at Southeast Missouri State dropped 18 percent (Southeast Missouri University, 2012a), and giving at the University of Illinois dropped 11 percent (University of Illinois Foundation, 2012). No financial contribution data was publicly available for Murray State. In athletics, Illinois State's football and men's basketball teams improved over the course of this study (ESPN, 2012b; ESPN, 2013b), while Southeast Missouri's football and basketball squads remained steady (Southeast Missouri State, 2012b; Southeast Missouri State, 2013), both squads' records declined at Illinois (ESPN, 2012a; ESPN, 2013a), and Murray State's football team declined in performance while its basketball team improved (Murray State University, 2012; Murray State University, 2013).

Nearby universities in *U.S. News and World Report's* National University category generally fared as well or better than SIU-Carbondale in the publication's reports. Athletic conference rival Illinois State University (Bloomington-Normal, Illinois) was a third-tier institution until 2011, when it ranked 156 (McGrath, 2010). The University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois) was in the top 50 each year, ranging from 37 in 2005 to 47 in 2011 (McGrath, 2004; McGrath, 2010). SIU's two other regional competitors, Murray State University (Murray, Kentucky) and Southeast Missouri State University (Cape Girardeau, Missouri.), were ranked in the Master's University category, with Southeast Missouri in the
Midwest and Murray State in the South. Southeast Missouri moved from the third tier to 65 in 2008, then fell to 80 by 2012 (McGrath, 2007; McGrath 2011). Murray State was a top-25 school, with a high mark of 14 in 2008 (McGrath, 2007). Academic reputations of these neighboring universities may have affected SIU's downward enrollment trend because prospective students may believe they could obtain a higher-quality education nearby.

**Athletics**

The on-field performance of the football and men's basketball teams declined over time. This is logical because those newsmakers typically have no direct impact on coaches, facilities, or recruiting. Both teams reached the National Collegiate Athletic Association's national tournaments multiple times early in the analysis, with the basketball squad's performance peaking with an NCAA Sweet 16 appearance in the 2006-2007 season (“Schedule-results,” 2013) and the football team reaching the Football Championship Series semifinals in 2007 and quarterfinals in 2005, 2006, and 2009 (“Southern Illinois football,” 2013). Neither squad played beyond a conference tournament after the 2009-2010 school year. Football's win percentage peaked in 2008 and declined each year thereafter.

![Fig 4.1](image-url)
University profile

Fig. 4.2

SIU's undergraduate headcount decreased 11 percent (16,872 to 15,000) from the fall of 2004 to the fall of 2011, with declines each year (Southern Illinois University, 2012). The biggest declines were 2008-2009 (2.6 percent), 2005-2006 (2.4 percent), 2009-2010 (1.8 percent), and 2007-2008 (1.3 percent). Because of the steady trend, it's unlikely either major crisis is to blame for the total decline, though the ongoing Wendler crisis could have contributed to the 2006 drop and a combination of the Wendler resolution and Poshard plagiarism discussion could have contributed to the decline in 2008.

While the overall headcount decreased, the number of minority students increased 25 percent, from 3,505 in 2004 to 4,390 in 2011 (Southern Illinois University, 2012) and shows no specific patterns related to the crises. As a portion of the undergraduate headcount, minority representation increased from 20.7 percent to 29.2 percent. From year-to-year, the number of minority students was: 3,505 (2004), 3,765 (2005), 3,710 (2006), 3,859 (2007), 4,028 (2008),

The percentage of freshmen in the upper percentiles of their graduating classes also showed a slight rise and fall with no apparent impact from series of SIU's crises. In 2004, 11 percent of freshmen finished in the top 10 percent of their graduating classes (Southern Illinois University, 2012). This number then fluctuated between 9 and 15 percent the remainder of the study. The percentage of students in the top quarter of graduating classes began and ended the research period at 31 percent, with high marks of 38 percent in 2006 and 39 percent in 2007. Top quarter percent dropped to 31 percent in 2008.

The number and overall percentage of minority faculty at SIU varied during the researched period. Minority faculty comprised a low of 9.9 percent (158) of the teaching staff in 2007 and a high of 19.9 percent in 2011 (321). The 2007 mark was 5 percent below 2006 and 7 percent below 2008 (Southern Illinois University, 2012). The 2007 figure could be attributed to the Wendler crisis, but in context of the full timespan of increasing numbers, the year was an outlier for SIU's non-tenure track hires.
Academic rankings

*U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges* rankings show two different pictures of SIU’s academics because of ranking changes for the 2011 issue. Crisis had no bearing on these marks. Before the change, *U.S. News* labeled the top 50 universities as the top tier, the next quarter as second tier, and divided remaining schools into two groups (Morse, 2010). Since 2011, the top 75 percent of schools have been considered top-tier and have been ranked numerically. SIU finished in the third tier (third quarter) of National University rankings 2005 (McGrath, 2004) and 2007-2010 (McGrath, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009). The university was a fourth-tier school in 2006 (McGrath, 2005). After the ratings change, SIU was near the bottom of the top tier from 2011-2013, finishing no higher than 179 (U.S. News and World Report, Inc., 2012).

Contributions to SIU Foundation

SIU Foundation data only was available for fiscal years 2005-2008, 2010, and 2011 because the Foundation did not produce two annual reports. Total contributions increased from 2005-2008, with annual totals ranging from $14.9 million in 2005 (Southern Illinois University Foundation, 2005) to $43.6 million in 2008 (Southern Illinois University Foundation, 2008). The financial data increased 2005-2008 in spite of the crises. After giving fell, it again increased 2009-2011 between crises and through the beginning of the faculty contract negotiations.
RQ 3: What KPIs and reputation markers were mentioned in university publications?

Analysis of SIU's marketing plans for RQ 3 reveals three distinct periods: four years of limited, unfocused efforts, two years of limited efforts, and two years of coordinated efforts with clear, repetitive messages. No single agency or campus office coordinated public relations efforts until 2008. In 2008, Barking Dawg Productions, the on-campus video production team, developed a series of promotional videos for the school as it embarked on two years of smaller coordinated marketing ventures. After Barking Dawg Productions was shut down, the university hired Chicago-based public relations firm Lipman Hearne in 2010 (Swinford, 2012).

In general, the university and its related organizations didn't frame marketing messages with key performance indicators in the first four years studied. In context of university crises, no marketing plans were in place during the Wendler crisis and Poshard plagiarism allegations. Marketing in 2008 and 2009 used some rankings and statistics that appealed to university
reputation. For example, an informational flier spotlighted the university's status as a *Princeton Review* “Best Midwestern University” and “Best Value College” and also mentioned SIU’s standing in the top 4 percent of U.S. research universities (Southern Illinois University, 2009). References like this became more common after SIU launched coordinated marketing efforts in 2010. A 2012 informational brochure notes the following facts: Faculty had been published in 10,000 journal articles since 2003, the campus has students from all 50 states and 92 countries, the business college was ranked in the top 5 percent of business schools in the world, and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* ranked SIU as the top school for African Americans pursuing education degrees (Southern Illinois University, 2012). These were in place during the faculty contract negotiations and strike. Advertisements from the alumni association followed the same template 2004-2008. These featured head shots of prominent SIU graduates, such as President Glenn Poshard, beside quotes about the association's importance. These quotes emphasized alumni roles such as “ambassador” of the university and called for commitment to stay connected to the university. Athletic department advertising also followed a uniform template for these years with no mention of relevant attributes. These ads used game action or imposing team photos behind bold text communicating event information. Football, volleyball, and both basketball teams were featured in these advertisements.

Marketing materials available through Issuu.com, a digital publishing website, revealed the use of key performance indicators mentioned or related to those of interest to this study beginning in 2009. Materials framed the university's academics through KPIs related to three categories: publication rankings, departmental achievements, and university research. References to “Best Midwestern University” and “Best Value College” designations by
Princeton Review (Southern Illinois University, 2009b) fit the first category, as did mentions of U.S. News rankings of the university's education department, a “military friendly” designation from Military Advanced Education (Fast facts, 2009), and a No. 42 mark in Diverse: Issues in Higher Education for degrees awarded to African-American students (Southern Illinois University, 2009c). Departmental achievements included the auto technology program's top rank from the Automotive Industry Planning Council and the fact that SIU was the only public school in the state with both fashion design and fashion merchandising degrees (Southern Illinois University, 2009b). University research performance was acknowledged by references to a top-100 research library (Southern Illinois University, 2009b).

According to SIU's marketing plan for Fiscal Year 2011, a unified public relations and marketing effort was instituted for the 2010 fiscal year (University Communications, 2010). The university budgeted $800,000 for both 2010 and 2011 marketing purposes. Output funds were directed to multimedia efforts across the state. The marketing plan presented SIU as “a student-centered, international, research university that is proud of its humble beginnings, its historic rise, and its current and future success.” Points of emphasis included programs with national recognition and the opportunity for students to work with expert faculty. Messages were framed through the use of KPIs that fit the publication rankings, research opportunities and a new third category: accessibility. Rankings were spotlighted in publications such as the 2011 homecoming alumni magazine, which announced SIU’s “Best of the Midwest” designation by Princeton Review (Southern Illinois University Alumni Association, 2011). Research achievements were spotlighted on billboards that proclaimed SIU’s academic clubs, Fulbright Scholars, Emmys, patents, articles, grant money awarded, etc. (University Communications, 2011). The third
category, accessibility, noted the university's opportunities for a diverse student body. This included SIU’s efforts to make the campus accessible for handicapped students (Southern Illinois University, 2010) and billboards that noted the university's cost, scholarships, and enrollment figures (Southern Illinois University 2012).
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the change in SIU's key performance indicators relative to media reporting of SIU's crisis response and university marketing efforts. Through content analysis of two prominent local newspapers' coverage of SIU crises as well as SIU's own publication materials, the study found corrective action and reduction of offensiveness as the primary crisis responses. Though five KPIs increased over the duration of this study, KPIs declined in the aftermath of the Wendler crisis resolution and during faculty contract negotiations.

This study's most surprising finding is the long-term KPI trends through prolonged crisis. The negative enrollment trend 2004-2011 despite positive marks in national publication rankings, student profile, and diversity was not expected. Based on Brinson and Benoit's (1996) observation that crisis threatens KPI performance, it was expected that a majority of the KPIs would trend downward. Despite a series of crises surrounding the university, academic and financial KPIs were not adversely affected. On this other hand, the downward trend in enrollment figures during the observation period may suggest that the prospective students’ decision to attend SIU might have been affected by the negative attention the university garnered in recent crises. However, the data does not really support or disregard the possibility that this is in fact related to the crises or an isolated incident. SIU’s marks are contrasted by national trends of increased undergraduate and minority student enrollment as well as financial donations increasing after 2008. At the regional level, enrollment increased while donations decreased at
universities near SIU.

Also, the timing of strong KPI declines relative to crisis response in the media and marketing efforts was delayed to the second school year after the Wendler crisis resolution though KPIs started to retreat the year after. Most of the Wendler crisis media coverage occurred after July 2006 until he was finally demoted to a faculty position in November 2006 after the plagiarism controversy. The Poshard plagiarism controversy followed in 2007 and was resolved without action against the president. While KPIs showed a positive trend in 2007, numbers dipped in 2008 with declines in enrollment, students in the top 10 and 25 percent of their graduating classes, and the two sports. It's interesting to note that KPIs held through a major crisis but dropped a year after a minor one. Through this time, media coverage of the crises showed that SIU administration resorted to denial and reduction of offensiveness responses while the university's limited marketing efforts opted for a positive emotional frame of the university instead of KPI-based promotions.

In contrast to KPI declines after the Wendler crisis resolution, KPI declines relative to crisis response in the media and marketing efforts were recorded in 2011, the year of the most media coverage of faculty contract negotiations and the subsequent strike. The university's undergraduate enrollment, freshman profile numbers, and athletic records declined while only diversity data and *U.S. News* rankings improved. This is interesting because most media coverage of faculty contract discussions began during the summer after students likely decided where to attend college in the fall. A logical explanation for this is the cumulative effects of local media and residents taking conversation cues from each other (Scheufele, 1999), or perhaps there is no relationship between the crises and KPIs. With this application of the framing process, local
reporters would have observed local public opinion toward the university through the previous crises and thus would have an historical frame of reference from which to watch the faculty contract talks. This frame would have shaped the way reporters presented issues surrounding the contract negotiations. If university administrators were also scanning the environment, they would have been looking for the best way to frame their arguments through the media to reach the public (Miller & Reichert, 2001).

The available data shows the university's attempts to frame the conversation through media didn't yield a favorable effect. By the spring of 2011, faculty contract discussion had been in the news occasionally for about a year, with some local residents likely thinking back to the Wendler and Poshard crises. In addition, the university would've been the center of state budget cut conversations (Kiley, 2012a). This would have created a circle of issue framing for the media and region in which the public already was discussing concerns about SIU's budget. Media reports framed SIU's response to the contract talks as reduction of offensiveness, denial, and corrective action. At that point, SIU's revamped marketing plan frequently referred to KPIs including national publication rankings, cost, faculty and student research publications, library honors, individual department recognition, and honors for campus facilities' accessibility to people who are handicapped. Despite these efforts to frame the university and the matter favorably, positive KPI performance momentum in 2009 and 2010 did not continue, as declines in three academic KPIs show they did not overcome the aggregate effects of long-term crisis.

As these observations continually note, many of the university's KPIs trend upward, but enrollment continues to drop. One possible answer may be found in media discussion enrollment data in the coverage of SIU crises that become a reputation and framing case of the
newsroom adage, “If it bleeds, it leads.” An enrollment decline trend is easy to put in the newspaper because it has tangible numbers attached to tangible financial impacts. As a result, headlines of enrollment losses for several consecutive years may become the default frame of reference for public opinion concerning the institution despite economic or other outside factors.

Another important finding in this study is how differences in media coverage of SIU locally, statewide, and in university-targeted markets also may factor into a broad understanding of reputation. Because of Illinois' budget woes, state universities have faced several years of delayed payments and decreased appropriations (Kiley, 2012a). While the budget concerns were faced by schools statewide, the dreary local headlines might have created a negative perception of the university's reputation on issues beyond administration's control. This negative feeling toward the university would have been exacerbated by the string of controversies surrounding the university during that period.

The lack of positive KPI change in relation to media reports of SIU's crisis responses indicate recommended responses for SCCT's transgressions could be modified to account for the nature of conflict. In these cases, SIU correctly acted according to Coombs' (1995) response grid by taking action to remedy matters and moving forward with some signs of humility. These actions broadly correspond to Coombs' (1995) concept of mortification through through victim compensation and apology. Image restoration's mortification response, which was used for the content analysis, echoes SCCT language on this matter (Benoit & Pang, 2008). However, the nature of the two conflicts doesn't reflect a need for a guilty party to apologize and make restitution. In these scenarios, conflict between parties didn't produce clear transgressors or victims. Instead, parties squared off against each other in campus venues and through the media.
In light of this, SCCT's recommended transgression response should be amended to account for the nature of conflict, actions taken by parties, and the level of public combativeness by those involved. This is similar to Coombs' (1995) discussion of accidents (unintentional misdeeds by internal personnel) that notes the importance of crisis context in determining appropriate responses. In other words, if no clear transgressor-victim relationship can be established, as in a conflict between an employee and employer, the party in power should consider actions from Coombs' (2006) denial or diminish response clusters. Responses should be used in a manner that works toward crisis resolution in a cautious, ethical manner so relationships may be rebuilt or strengthened.

Given the contextual elements of the two primary crises, SIU could have selected more appropriate responses to appease public opinion. The Wendler crisis could have played out differently in the public sphere had SIU weighed the situation in light of the other plagiarism cases referenced in this study. In this situation, a different type of corrective action (firing or formal reprimand) combined with better framing efforts may have kept performance indicators from declining. Dismissal would be an option if the university could frame Wendler's deed as a more serious offense than others in SIU's past. If the offenses were deemed to be a middle ground between the other plagiarism cases, a reprimand may have appeased critics. In the other key crisis, administrators could have adopted a more-conciliatory tone in the media during faculty contract negotiations and early days of the strike. Coombs' (2006) deal cluster tactics of ingratiating, concern, and compassion may have yielded a quicker resolution and more goodwill from SIU's regional stakeholders, but media reported the university opted for reduction of offensiveness and denial, which fit SCCT's deny and diminish clusters.
Limitations and future research

There are several limitations with this study. First, because of a myriad of factors not addressed in this study, performance indicators may not be correlated to crisis response or promotional efforts. All state colleges and universities have been affected by Illinois' budget crisis through cuts in financial aid and campus services. These budget cuts may limit the number and demographics of students who can afford to attend college. Illinois' main financial aid program has denied 100,000 students aid each of the past three years and hasn't been able to fund recipients at their full eligibility (Mercer, 2012). Mercer also notes the average tuition at Illinois' public universities is the fifth highest in the U.S. Additionally, enrollment growth at SIU's sister campus in Edwardsville and the local community college could affect student-related KPIs. SIU-Edwardsville's total enrollment increased from 13,493 in 2004 to 14,235 in 2011 (“Fact Book,” 2012). Tenth-day enrollment at the local community college, John A. Logan College, increased from 5,731 in Fall 2004 to 6,787 in Fall 2011 (“Enrollment Data,” 2012). According to the data set, the college's 10th-day enrollment peaked at 7,217 in Spring 2011. This growth could take away potential students from SIU-Carbondale and thus alter KPIs. The regional context for enrollment numbers shows SIU to be an outlier in this regard, and thus overcomes questions of validity. Despite Illinois' financial issues, enrollment increased at the three state schools included for context (Illinois State University, the University of Illinois, and SIU-EEdwardsville). This growth occurred in a national climate of enrollment growth as discussed earlier.

Another limitation is the lack of direct access to administration's response strategies during the crises. As an alternative to this approach, the study relied on the local newspapers'
coverage of these crises to gain understanding of the response strategies. However, media framing scholars suggest that media's portrayal of an issue or organization impact the way the public views an issue. This portrayal would then affect the public response.

Finally, the intercoder reliability alpha of .76 fell short of the target .80 alpha. This was caused by disagreements over the nature of corrective action and semantic differences between evasion of responsibility and reduction of offensiveness. Further discussions between the coders resolved this disagreement and the later coding yielded a sound intercoder reliability of .82.

While this study added quantifiable measures of university reputation and expanded existing research through a longitudinal study, it provides several avenues from which to explore university reputation. Most significantly, more research is needed to explore the interaction between enrollment and university reputation. Because enrollment is an easily quantified statistic, it receives media attention and becomes a talking point to local residents. However, this study found SIU's key performance indicators in several categories increased while enrollment decreased. This disconnect deserves more attention. Future analysis should examine whether change in one causes change in the other. It's also possible enrollment and reputation may change in response to underlying factors such as athletics, national rankings, or growth in popular degree programs.

The project's primary weaknesses leave room for improvement in future studies. The greatest deficiency, a lack of qualitative interviews, meant it couldn't analyze reasoning behind university responses. This also made it difficult to formally correlate variables or explore potential reputation factors affected by internal and external elements beyond the scope of the project.
Additionally, this study lacked university budget data the author initially wanted to track. A line-item comparison of public relations, marketing, and crisis response budgets would have helped determine the full extent of SIU's crisis response. This would be an advisable addition to a future study.

Also, by virtue of this project's deadline, little data for the 2012-2013 school year was available. Data from this year would have bookended the crisis study by providing a comparison point the first year after the strike. Future research with any of these elements will provide a more complete picture of factors that affect reputation.

Finally, reputation research should compare university reputation in universities' primary markets with secondary markets. This would better account for the variety of university publics and would potentially give institutions a better understanding of how to approach distant or new markets. If a longitudinal study analyzes reputation during crisis in a secondary market, the study would provide a guide for long-distance public relations and marketing efforts to areas outside a university's home territory. This approach also could be used to analyze responses by different publics to different public relations or marketing campaigns in effort to determine what reputation indicators and messaging best reaches key audiences.
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Publications.
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Content analysis codesheet

Listed below are the image restoration strategies and tactics with definitions. The five image restoration strategic typologies are italicized. Tactics for each typology are listed for further explanation. Examples in parentheses may resemble actual responses.

Analyze articles using the sentence as the unit of analysis. Focus only on statements by university administration and spokespeople. For articles about the Wendler crisis, don't include his comments. For articles about the strike, don't include comments by faculty members.

For each article, tally the number of times each strategy is used in the document and record the top two on the code sheet. If two strategies tie for most-used, record only those two. If two tie for second most-used, record the top three strategies.

**Denial:** An organization refuses to take the blame for the crisis.

Simple denial: The organization didn't do the misdeed. (“We didn't do it.”)

Shift the blame: Something outside the organization performed the misdeed. (“The union failed to come through.”)

**Evasion of responsibility:** An organization offers excuses for the crisis.

Provocation: The organization responded to another source's actions. (“The state forced us to do this.”)

Defeasibility: The organization lacked information or ability to respond. (“We didn't
have the finances to offer the contract faculty wanted.”)

Accident: The crisis-triggering incident was a mishap. (“It was a freak one-time occurrence.”)

Good intentions: The organization meant well in the act. (“Our offer was a good-faith effort to make peace with the union.”)

*Reducing offensiveness:* An organization decreases the event's severity.

Bolster: Stress the organization's positive traits. (“Our faculty are top-notch researchers.”)

Minimization: The act wasn't serious. (“This situation isn't that big of a concern.”)

Differentiate: The act was less offensive than another situation. (“Other plagiarism scandals have involved more people than this.”)

Transcendence: There are more important considerations. (“Salaries may be a concern, but other financial matters must be addressed first.”)

Attack the accuser: Reduce an attacker's credibility. (“The accuser is just jealous.”)

Compensation: Pay the victims. (Pay victims' legal costs.)

*Corrective action:* Plan to solve or prevent the problem. (Show a list of safeguards to prevent faculty and students from plagiarizing papers.)

*Mortification:* Apologize for the act. (“We apologize to the students and families.”)
APPENDIX B

Newspaper articles and documents from content analysis referenced in the study


