

## Editor's Introduction: Using *CSSC* Cases in the Classroom

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The second volume of *Case Studies in Strategic Communication* featured four outstanding case studies that made it through the peer review process to publication. These cases covered a range of topics: social media strategy in higher education, a tongue-in-cheek zombie campaign to educate the public about emergency preparedness, the widely publicized Susan G. Komen/Planned Parenthood crisis, and a student-designed campaign to reduce binge drinking on a college campus.

These cases may have enormous value in the public relations, marketing, or advertising classroom. They cover current issues in the public and private sectors, often with a focus on social media and the impact of new technologies on crises and strategic planning. In my own teaching, I have found that scholarly journal articles and textbooks provide theoretical and conceptual grounding, and having students present news clippings for class discussion helps connect these concepts to current events. What is missing, though, is a stronger bridge between the real events of the day and the major lessons from disciplinary journals and books. A skilled teacher can build these bridges for students, of course, but it is not without considerable effort. Hopefully, *CSSC* is that bridge for teachers.

Perhaps the best use of *CSSC* in the classroom is as a supplement, rounding out a reading list for a given strategic communication topic. For example, a unit on crisis communication would no doubt include key scholarly readings from the canon of strategic communication literature, such as the many articles that explain Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). In addition, an educator may assign some news articles or blog posts about recent crises in the news, as a way to give some traction to the scholarly concepts. Adding one or more cases from *CSSC*, however,

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would deepen this discussion, giving students more detail and exposure to single cases from recent years with which to center a class discussion. These crises cases might include Virginia S. Harrison's case about [Susan G. Komen for the Cure's clash with Planned Parenthood](#) (Volume 2), or Laura Richardson Walton, Holli H. Seitz, and Kathleen Ragsdale's case about [how the CDC uses YouTube during the H1N1 flu epidemic](#) (Volume 1). For the educator, then, this suite of readings would let students navigate the key theories and concepts related to crisis, explore some detailed coverage of one or more cases through CSSC readings, and connect all of these lessons to events of the day through news articles and blogs.

All CSSC articles come with a slate of discussion questions or classroom activities, too, located at the end of each case. These discussion questions are good starting points for connecting case details to bigger strategic communication concepts.

The acceptance rate for Volume 2 was 36%. The journal transitioned to its new home at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism in summer of 2013, and I extend a hearty "thank you" to Larry Gross and Arlene Luck at Annenberg Press, the journal's new publisher. Thanks also to the editorial board, which welcomes a few new hard-working members, and to editorial assistants Laurie Phillips and JR Ramsey. Thanks also to a handful of ad hoc reviewers who offered their expertise to Volume 2: Annie Maxfield, John Remensperger, Dave Remund, Alyssa Stepusin, and Jian (Jay) Wang.

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