Learning to Respond (not react) When Disaster Strikes

Jeff Schiffman - Tulane University (LA)
Djiara Meehan - St. John’s School (PR)
Mary Tipton Woolley - Georgia Tech (GA)
UC Irvine is under fire for rescinding 500 admission offers two months before fall term begins

By TERESA WATANABE  JUL 28, 2017  2:30 PM

Ashley Gonzalez was sent a letter of admission to UC Irvine. Just weeks before the fall term begins, however, the university has rescinded the offer. On Wednesday the university readmitted her. (Video by Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

For four years, Ashley Gonzalez skimmed on sleep, family outings and hanging out with friends to excel at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles. Her work paid off when she achieved her lifelong dream of admission to the University of California.

Then UC Irvine, her campus of choice, abruptly rescinded its acceptance, just two months before the start of the fall quarter.

"I felt I was going to pass out. I couldn't stop crying," the 18-year-old said in tears as she recounted her story in an interview.
The Tulane Story
From: fimservice@tulane.edu
Date: December 14, 2016 11:05:09 AM
To: accounts@tulane.edu, studentbelum
Subject: Tulane University Account Notification

Dear Amelia,

I am pleased to welcome you to Tulane! All of us with Tulane University Technology Services are excited that you are becoming a part of this great institution. It is our mission to provide you with great technology resources and service while you are here. Below is your technology account information, including your Tulane ID and Tulane User Name. A separate email will be sent to you with your initial password.

Tulane ID: [Redacted]
Tulane User Name: [Redacted]
Tulane Email: [Redacted]@tulane.edu

Tulane Password: delivered as a separate e-mail
Jeff,

I just called you and got your voicemail, so I’m emailing you here. I just got an ecstatic email from Avery saying that she was admitted ED. I don’t know how you did it, but you did it! Thank you so much. Your advocacy is not going unnoticed, and I personally am grateful for everything you did and do, not just for Avery but all of [redacted] kids. I just wish I could thank you in real time over the phone. Thank you so much.

You don’t know it, but this news comes at such a good time for Avery and her entire family. Avery was just in my office yesterday teary-eyed, as her grandmother was just moved into hospice care. (She’s been battling pancreatic cancer for a while and things have recently taken a very bleak turn.) I know this news is buoying the entire family in this difficult time, so your advocacy for and attention to Avery means more than you know. Thank you.

Happy holidays, indeed, for the [redacted] Wishing you well and safe travels since it sounds like you’re out of town. Happy holidays, friend.
Gratefully,
Steff

Steffany
Co-Director of College Counseling
Agony as Tulane Applicants Learn Acceptance Emails Are in Error

By ANEMONA HARTCOLLIS and RICHARD PÉREZ-Peña  
DECEMBER 16, 2016

U.S.

CONGRATULATIONS 2016 GRADUATES!

Thu 3/16/2017 11:17 AM

You made the news!

Here's what we'll be sharing with your connections and followers.

Learn More

Schiffman, Jeffrey G

FW: You appeared in nola.com

Bing Maps

Unsubscribe

Tulane Ranked #1 for being the worst on College Admissions

To Schiffman, Jeffrey G

You forwarded this message on 11/2/2017 8:52 AM.

Bing Maps

Get more apps

Jeff,

My husband and I are literally shocked at the complete disregard for the entire college admission process that
We Messed Up.

One thing we pride ourselves here in the Office of Admission is being a compassionate place. I’ve written frequently before about anxiety, love, and the fact that it’s all going to be okay in the end.

Yesterday, we made a mistake that goes against all of those ideas of compassion. A mistake that has created such an immense sense of anxiety for a population of students who want to go to Tulane more than anything else in the world.

Around 10:00pm on December 14th, Tulane Technology Services sent an email to 130 Early Decision applicants. The email welcomed them to the Tulane family and gave them a Tulane email address. While we are currently working on figuring out why and how this happened, for those 130 students, that does not matter. We’ve created an anxiety so deep for this group that there really aren’t words to describe it. I’ll own up to it right now.

The reality is that we did not have final decisions for those 130 students yet. For a few hours, they had notification from Tulane that led them to believe they had been admitted before we sent an email to let them know we did not have a final decision and to disregard the tech services email. I am sure many celebrated and posted on social media about it, as any admitted student should.

What Tulane has done is inexcusable and I offer those students, their families, their high school counselors and their communities a heartfelt apology. Tulane can do better and we will.

Many people have told me that we should just admit that population as it’s the right thing to do. In a perfect world, that would be true. But admitting an additional 130 students is much easier said than done and greatly throws off the size of the class. It simply can’t be done. We sent final decisions to our Early Decisions applicants by midnight on December 15th.

Please know I am here to speak with each of you who was affected by this. You can email me any time at jsschiff@tulane.edu. I can’t say “I know what you’re going through,” because I do not. All I can offer is a an apology.

Life is so much about how you respond (not react) in situations like this. It is my hope that we learn from this. We have really messed this one up, and for that, I offer you my deepest apology.

Posted 15th December 2016 by Jeff Schiffman
Spring Scholars

Spring Scholars begin their freshman year on campus in the spring after taking the fall to pursue enriching activities. There are opportunities available for fall travel abroad experiences, or students can pursue internships, explore their academic interests, and take advantage of other opportunities.

Opportunities

Spend the fall studying abroad in Rome or Paris with other Spring Scholars. Or get real-world experience and start building your resume with a fall internship. Discover all the opportunities that await you in the fall.

FAQ

Get your questions answered and learn more about the Spring Scholars program. Find answers.

Ambassadors

Hear from current Spring Scholars about their experiences. Our Spring Scholars Ambassadors can answer your questions and help you decide if Tulane is right for you. Connect with the Ambassadors.

Spring Scholars Portal

Facebook Group
Saint John’s School Story
Saint John's School
Transportation Plan
for Employees and Students

- Dorado (One Bus)
  - First Stop Plantation
  - Second Stop: Starbucks
  - Depart: 6:45 am
  - Depart: 7:00 am

- Bayamon (One Bus)
  - Monseñor Kino Entrance
  - Depart: 7:00 am

- Guaynabo (Three Buses)
  - Tornumar Park
  - Depart: 7:00 am

- Guaynabo (One Bus)
  - El General Shopping Center
  - Depart: 7:00 am

**All buses will depart 12/15 at 2:00 pm to their destination**
The Georgia Tech Story
Saturday, September 16

Call about suspicious man was made by Georgia Tech student killed ... 
Washington Post - Sep 18, 2017
The call that led Georgia Tech campus police to respond to a man reportedly wielding a knife was made by the student who was later shot and killed by officers, police investigators said Monday night. That student, Scout Schultz, left three suicide notes behind in a dormitory room, according to the Georgia ... 

Lawyer: Georgia Tech police overreacted by killing campus LGBT ... 
USA TODAY - Sep 18, 2017

Georgia Tech campus police shoot, kill barefoot student holding 'tiny ... 
Highly Cited - New York Daily News - Sep 17, 2017
911 call about suspicious man was made by Georgia Tech student ... 
In-Depth - Chicago Tribune - Sep 18, 2017
GBit: Georgia Tech student called 911 before shooting 
Local Source - Atlanta Journal Constitution - Sep 18, 2017
Student LGBTQ Leader Wielding Pocketknife Shot and Killed by ... 
Blog - Slate Magazine (blog) - Sep 18, 2017

New video of Georgia Tech shooting surfaces 
Atlanta Journal Constitution - Oct 11, 2017
New video of the death of Georgia Tech student Scout Schultz provides possibly the clearest view yet of last month’s shooting by a campus police officer. The video, shot by a student in a nearby residential hall and linked via the Twitter account of a lawyer associated with the case, shows Schultz walking ... 
Attorney: Video sheds new light in shooting of Georgia Tech student 
WSB Atlanta - Oct 11, 2017

Georgia Tech Shooting Victim Made 911 Call to Police That Led to ... 
RollingStone.com - Sep 19, 2017
Scout Schultz, the Georgia Tech student who was fatally shot Saturday night, was also the person behind a call to Georgia Tech campus police earlier ... According to a statement from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Tech Police officers received a 911 call around 11:17 p.m. Saturday about a ... 
Ga. Tech student shot by officer, killed on campus 
Local Source - Atlanta Journal Constitution - Sep 17, 2017
Update: Sunday, Sept. 17, 2017
6:45 a.m.

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

I am deeply saddened to inform the Georgia Tech community of the loss of fourth year computer engineering student Scout Schultz of Lilburn, Georgia. Scout's sudden and tragic death today has been devastating news for the Schultz family, classmates, and for members of the community who knew Scout.

Update: Sunday, Sept. 17, 2017
7:50 p.m.

Remembering Scout Schultz

To the Georgia Tech community,

Late last night, we lost one of our students, Scout Schultz, a fourth-year computer engineering major and a campus leader. Our hearts and prayers go out to Scout's family, friends, and colleagues as we mourn Scout's life and the unrealized potential of what could have been.

While this is a heart-wrenchingly painful time for the entire Georgia Tech community, it is important to know that all of us here at Georgia Tech are committed to providing a safe and healthy, living and learning environment for all of our students, faculty and staff.

As we work through this tragic event, I encourage you to take advantage of all of the resources we provide here on campus, for mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

In the days and weeks to come, we will offer opportunities for dialogue and will respond with additional resources as needed for healing. Together, we will get through this. We are one Georgia Tech.

G.P. "Bud" Peterson
President, Georgia Tech
Monday, September 18

Three arrested in violent Georgia Tech protests after police shoot student

Nelson Helm - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Updated 2:10 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2017 Filed in AJC Homepage

VIDEO - Protests erupt at Georgia Tech over officer involved shooting

1 minute left

Anger over the police shooting of a Pride Alliance leader at Georgia Tech turned violent Monday night.
Update: Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2017
11:30 a.m.

A Message to the Georgia Tech Community:

The events of the past few days have been incredibly difficult and challenging for the entire Georgia Tech community. Consistent with our traditions and values, it is especially important that during times like these we come together and support one another.

One of our student leaders, Scout Schultz, has died and we all bear the tremendous weight of that loss. I met Scout last year at the Lavender Graduation ceremony, and our entire Georgia Tech community is mourning the tragic loss of this smart and passionate young person. Losing a student, friend, colleague, and campus leader is one of the most difficult experiences that any of us will have to face.

Georgia Tech has gained national attention as a result of this incident, and while today’s communications technologies provide us with almost instantaneous coverage, we must rely on professional investigation and evaluation, and not draw conclusions too quickly. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) is currently investigating the incident and reviewing all of the circumstances surrounding Scout’s death. Details will be revealed by the GBI as they become available.

For now, we are focusing on mourning the loss and remembering Scout’s many contributions to the Georgia Tech community over the past four years. Last night’s vigil at the Campanile that was coordinated by the Pride Alliance and the Progressive Student Alliance was attended by almost 500 community members including Scout’s family. Unfortunately, they were also joined by several dozen others intent on creating a disturbance and inciting violence. We believe many of them were not part of our Georgia Tech community, but rather outside agitators intent on disrupting the event. They certainly did not honor Scout’s memory nor represent our values by doing so.

Rest assured that our campus community is responding to these recent events in a positive and constructive manner, in spite of the many challenges they represent. I am grateful for our students, faculty, staff, campus leaders, and for our campus police. The response by our students to last night’s events is particularly heartwarming – they were on Facebook and Twitter through the night trying to find ways to show support and to say this is not who we are.

In closing, I want to convey to you how proud I am of the Georgia Tech community. I know the true character of our community and am confident that we can work together to address our challenges and heal.
So: how do you respond...

And not react?
• First... you make a list.
• Break it down into smaller tasks. Even mammoth tasks are just a series of component parts.
  • What needs to get done first? What does your community need?
• Decide on primary roles, leadership roles and spokespeople
• Use your resources
  • Reach out to chief communication officer to ensure the information you have is the most up-to-date and appropriate to share
• Ensure an appropriate response
  • Ensure your staff knows what is appropriate to share with families and other constituents
  • Give your team the talking points and prepare them for the tough conversations

• Follow the leader
  • Campus-wide communications came directly from the Institute President & VP for Campus Life
  • Messages were also sent to parents
  • Not our place to make additional statement

• Know when to hold back
  • Are previously scheduled emails, letters, blog posts, social media posts, etc. necessary/appropriate?

• Take the temperature in different places. What’s the reaction from school counselors?
• Don’t wait too long to respond, but balance reaction vs. response
  • Respond before students and parents ask
• Don’t be afraid to apologize; vulnerability is a strength
• Be transparent and easily accessible
• Control your emotions and keep an even keel
  • does getting upset provide you with more options? Probably not.
• Put things in perspective. You can’t change the obstacle but can you change the perspective of how the obstacle appears?
  • “Where the head goes, the body follows.”
• Be objective: Take your situation and pretend it’s not happening to you. Pretend that it’s not important and that it doesn't matter. How much easier would it be for you to know what to do now? (from Obstacle is the way)
• Action on the margins
• You’re in it for the long haul
• Stay in present and focus on only what is in your control. Let go of what is out of your realm of control.
  • The Serenity Prayer
  • Focus on what is in your power magnifies that power.
• Persist! “When you play all the way to the whistle, there’s no reason to worry about the clock” - Ryan Holiday.
  • When people ask how “the situation” is going: “we’re working on it. We’re getting closer.”
• Check on people
  • Your office colleagues
  • Campus colleagues, especially those directly involved
  • Students
• Take time for self care. Meditate, exercise, laugh at yourself.
Breathe in
Is this.... an Opportunity?

• “Bad companies are destroyed by crisis. Good companies survive them. Great companies are improved by them.”
  • Andy Groove, CEO of Intel

• Choose to see the good in any situation

• Half of Fortune 500 companies were founded in a recession

• “The one way to guarantee we don’t benefit from failure or disaster- to ensure it’s a bad thing- is to not learn from it.”
  • Ryan Holliday, The Obstacle is the Way
Recommended Reading

The Obstacle is the Way by Ryan Holiday

How Mindfulness Informs the Practice of Leading: [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1105711.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1105711.pdf)


10 Tips for Tackling the Toughest Workplace Conflicts: [https://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2012/07/18/10-tips-for-tackling-the-toughest-workplace-conflicts](https://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2012/07/18/10-tips-for-tackling-the-toughest-workplace-conflicts)


5 Simple and Compelling Behaviors of Mindful Leaders: [https://www.inc.com/entrepreneurs-organization/these-5-traits-distinguish-mindful-leaders-from-oblivious-bosses.html](https://www.inc.com/entrepreneurs-organization/these-5-traits-distinguish-mindful-leaders-from-oblivious-bosses.html)