

# Process & Procedures to Address Concerns about Faith-based/ Controversial Issues

Girl Scouts of Southeastern  
Michigan

Revised March 5, 2012

Reviewed and Approved by:

## **Crisis Communications Plan**

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan (GSSEM) has a Crisis Communications Plan in place which details the actions to be taken when a situation occurs which could be considered a “crisis” to the Council. For purposes of the Plan, the term “crisis” covers a range of scenarios, from local negative press coverage to serious situations that may include actual or potential injury or illness. There are numerous questions provided in the Plan in order to determine if a situation is deemed a “crisis”. Most of these questions relate to the safety and wellbeing of girl and adult members (see full Crisis Communications Plan for the detailed procedures related to safety and wellbeing of members). However, there are three questions included in the Plan which determine if a faith-based or controversial issue is considered a “crisis”:

- Has the council’s integrity been damaged?
- Will this event draw attention from the media?
- Will a significant number of stakeholders react adversely?

The Crisis Communication Plan Goals and Objectives related to faith-based and controversial issues include: “Take appropriate actions to protect the reputation of the Council” and “work to remove the issue from the news cycle within 48 hours of the initial incident.”

For practical purposes, different levels of crisis require different levels of response. The first level is determined to be a crisis situation with minimal impact which includes: “A mild, local negative media story about the Council or a neighboring Council.”

Based upon these criteria, the Crisis Communications Plan addresses the types of situations which may occur as a result of misinformation being distributed, published, or discussed which could jeopardize the relationship or reputation that GSSEM has with various faith-based organizations, members, potential members, or other key community stakeholders. The following process and procedures have been established to serve as an addendum to GSSEM’s Crisis Communications Plan in order to detail the specific actions to be taken when a concern related to faith-based or controversial issues is raised.

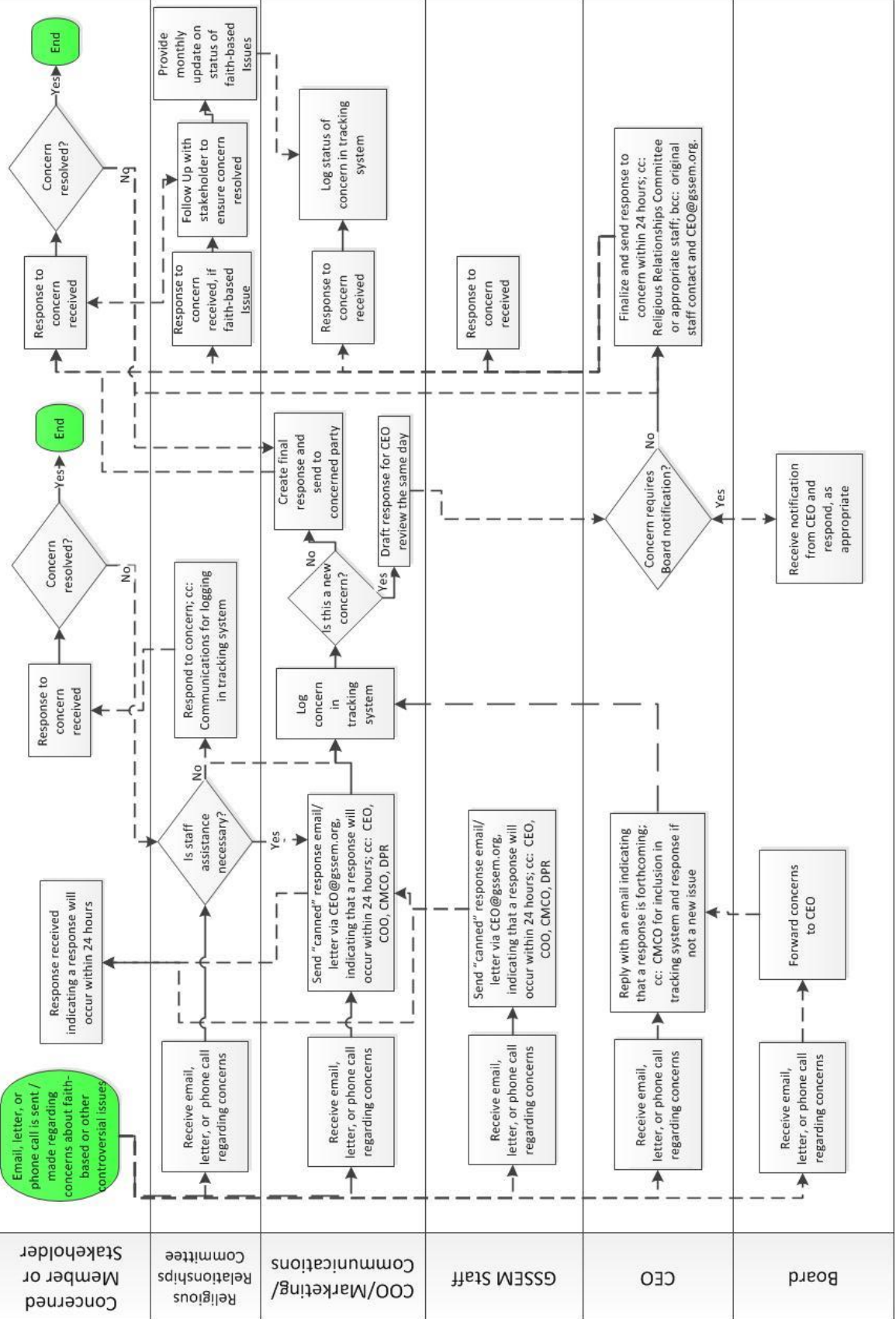
### **Process & Procedures in Response to a Faith-Based or Controversial Concern**

Page three provides a business process flow chart which illustrates the actions to be taken when an email, letter, or phone call is sent by a concerned member or stakeholder to either a member of the Religious Relationships Committee, the Board of Directors, the CEO, or GSSEM staff regarding concerns about faith-based or other controversial issues. Each “lane” of the chart indicates the party responsible for taking action at a particular point in time, beginning with the Concerned Member or Stakeholder. The arrows indicate the direction for the next step in the process. A dotted line arrow indicates communication via email, mail, or phone. A diamond is used to indicate that the process can go in more than one direction, depending upon the answer to the question.

Page four details the step-by-step procedures documenting the process flow chart.

Communications in Response to Concerns about Faith-based/Controversial Issues

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## Procedure to Use in Response to Faith-based or Controversial Issues:

- A member or stakeholder sends an email/letter or makes a phone call to a Religious Relationships Committee member, the Board of Directors, the CEO, or GSSEM staff regarding a faith-based or other controversial issue.
- If received by:
  - The Religious Relationships Committee: Determine if staff assistance is necessary.
    - If no: Communicate with the member or stakeholder to resolve the concern. Send a copy of the concern, indicating how it was resolved to ceo@gssem.org for logging into the tracking system.
    - If yes: Send a copy of the concern to ceo@gssem.org for the Communications Team to handle.
  - The Chief Operations Officer (COO), Marketing & Communications Team (CMCO, DPR), or GSSEM staff: Send the “canned” response email indicating that a response will occur within 24 hours. Copy ceo@gssem.org.
  - The CEO: Reply by email to the member or stakeholder indicating that a response is forthcoming. Copy ceo@gssem.org to forward the concern to the Communications Team to draft a response.
  - The Board of Directors: Forward the concern to ceo@gssem.org for handling.
- Once concern is received by the Communications Team:
  - Log concern into the tracking system.
  - Determine if the concern is related to an issue which has already been addressed in the past.
    - If yes, use the standard response language and respond to the member or stakeholder on the same day.
    - If no, draft a response to the new concern/controversial issue on the same day and forward to the CEO for review.
- Once CEO receives the draft response to a new concern:
  - Determine if the Board of Directors needs to be notified of the concern / controversial issue.
    - If yes: Notify the Board.
    - If no: Finalize and send the response to the concern within 24 hours. Copy the Religious Relationships Committee or other appropriate staff/stakeholders, and blind carbon copy (bcc) the original staff person contacted and ceo@gssem.org.
- Once final response is received:
  - By Communications Team: Log status of concern in tracking system.
  - By Religious Relationships Committee: If it is a faith-based issue, follow up with the member or stakeholder to ensure that the concern is resolved. Provide a monthly update on the status of faith-based issues to ceo@gssem.org for logging into the tracking system.
- Is the concern resolved?
  - If no: Notify Communications and the CEO (if new issue), to continue to work toward resolution.
  - If yes: Process complete.