

# ECC Guidelines for Responding to Newsworthy Events

At Elgin Community College, we recognize that events happening locally, nationally, and globally can deeply affect our students, employees, and community. Colleges are often asked to issue public statements following tragedies or major events.

While these statements are well-intentioned, inconsistent or reactive messaging can cause confusion or draw the institution into matters outside its educational role.

These guidelines provide a clear mission-aligned framework for when ECC will respond publicly, when internal communication is more appropriate, and when the college will instead focus on support and education.

## Our Approach

ECC may issue public statements when events directly involve our students, employees, alumni, district community, or when an event clearly aligns with our mission.

In other situations, ECC may communicate internally, offer support services, or create opportunities for dialogue rather than issue public statements.

This approach ensures ECC responds with care and consistency while remaining true to our mission and values.

## 5 Guiding Principles

### 1. Student-Centered

The student learning environment is our highest priority. Responses should emphasize well-being, equity, access, and safety.

### 2. Consistent and Predictable

ECC follows clear criteria, so the community understands why a statement is, or is not, issued.

### 3. Educational Role

When appropriate, ECC may offer forums, resources, or classroom-aligned opportunities instead of a public statement.

### 4. Measured, Not Reactive

ECC values accuracy and compassion. Statements will not be rushed or issued solely in response to external pressure.

### 5. Mission-Aligned

Public messaging reinforces ECC's values, not political positions or commentary beyond our scope.

## ECC May Issue a Public Statement When:

- There is a campus community loss or tragedy

- Events directly affect ECC operations or safety
- There are mission-linked educational observances

## ECC May Not Issue a Public Statement

In most cases, ECC will not issue statements on:

- State, national, or global tragedies with no direct connection to ECC.
- Issues that are highly politicized or outside the scope of the college's educational mission.
- Events where ECC has no unique role, expertise, or perspective to add.

## Instead, ECC may choose to:

- Communicate directly with specific students or employee groups.
- Provide educational programming (forums, facilitated discussions, or teach-ins).
- Offer support services such as counseling or engagement through affinity groups.

This framework provides a consistent, transparent approach to how ECC responds to major events. It ensures our communications remain mission-driven, student-centered, and appropriately balanced—showing care and compassion without positioning the college as a commentator on every national or global issue.