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Professor Davis

COMM-200

February 20, 2018

News Release Assignment

In my news release, I decided to primarily use the mea culpa approach. I felt that attempting to spin the story would only hurt the University's image more, whereas admitting failure and responsibility would likely decrease the backlash, similar to how defendants who plead guilty in criminal cases get plea bargains for immediately admitting responsibility. I felt it was important to be transparent and provide all the key information. I took responsibility and admitted that the university had failed the health inspection, and brought forward two key quotes.

My first quote was the one from President Burwell, to show how far up into the administration this report has gone and how the University as a whole takes it very seriously. The quote from Burwell was also apologetic, helping me with my approach. My second quote was from the university compliance officer, Mike Smith and it provided more information about what the violations were and how the university intends to fix them. I believe by using these quotations, especially in this order I have helped supplement the facts of the report with the apologetic response of the university.

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SURPRISE HEALTH INSPECTION
University response to Department of Health Report



For Immediate Release:
February 22, 2018

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The Washington D.C. Department of Health conducted a surprise inspection of Terrace Dining Room on Monday. The report, published earlier today, includes a list of 32 specific violations of the District’s health code. The same dining room had received an A sanitation grade on last inspection in 2016.

The University issued an apology to its students and staff after learning of the violations. With the new information brought forward in this Department of Health Report, the University plans to internally investigate the dining hall and its functions to make it a safer environment for all those it serves- staff, faculty and students.

“The health and safety of our students and staff are of paramount importance. We are confident that our Terrace Dining Room provides healthy, nutritious meals. In fact, I eat lunch there myself a few times a week,” said University president Sylvia Burwell.

President Barack Obama appointed Burwell as the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services in 2014, and she served in this role until the end of his term in January 2017. Burwell became the 15th President of American University, and the first female to hold the office in June of 2017.

“The vast majority of the violations on this list are for very minor infractions: things like not having large enough labels on food containers. We take food safety very seriously at the university and have already corrected nearly all of the items listed by the health inspector,” said university compliance officer Mike Smith. “We are working closely with our contractor, Gourmet Dining, to correct all problems. Gourmet Dining is conducting additional staff training in food handling and preparation.”

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Chartered by Congress in 1893, American University is a private research university located in Washington, D.C. Its current undergraduate, graduate, and law school enrollment is 13,000 students.

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