

# REGISTRATION

Please complete the registration form and mail to:  
**Whitney Black/PRSSA**  
**Department of Communication**  
**109 Old Student Union Bldg**  
**Western Carolina University**  
**Cullowhee, NC 28723**

Cost: \$35 for professionals  
\$20 for students

The deadline for registration is March 31.

Please make checks payable to:  
WCU PRSSA. For additional questions please email  
wcuprssa@yahoo.com or call Whitney Black at 704-616-1699.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch menu: "The Catamount Special Salad"  
Fresh spinach topped with grilled chicken, caramelized  
onions, & balsamic dressing including a dessert.  
Check box if you desire a portabella mushroom  
instead of chicken.

Cookies and punch will also be available  
later in the day.



## Directions:

WCU is located in Cullowhee, NC, 5 miles south of Sylva on  
Highway 107.

- **From Asheville, NC and points east:**  
Follow I-40 West to Exit 27 (Highway 74 West). Follow Highway  
74 West to Exit 85 in Sylva. At third light turn left onto Highway  
107 South. Follow Highway 107 South to campus. Once you  
arrive on campus, follow the "Event Parking" signs to the Ramsey  
Center.
- **From Knoxville, TN and points west:**  
From I-40 East, take Exit 27 to Highway 74 West. Follow Highway  
74 to Exit 85 in Sylva. At third light turn left onto Highway 107  
South. Follow Highway 107 South to campus. Once you arrive on  
campus, follow the "Event Parking" signs to the Ramsey Center.
- **From Atlanta, GA:**  
From I-85 North, exit left onto I-985. I-985 will turn into GA  
365 and will then merge with 441 North. Follow 441 North to  
Dillsboro, NC. At the light in Dillsboro, turn right onto Business  
23. Follow Business 23 through Dillsboro and Sylva to Highway  
107 South intersection. Go straight through intersection and  
follow Highway 107 South to campus. Once you arrive on campus,  
follow the "Event Parking" signs to the Ramsey Center.
- **From Charlotte, NC:**  
From I-85 South, exit onto Highway 74 West towards Shelby.  
Follow Highway 74 West to I-26 West to Asheville. In Asheville,  
exit left onto I-40 West. Follow directions above from Asheville.

## Parking:

Parking will be in the baseball lot across from the Ramsey  
Regional Activity Center. Follow the "Event Parking" signs  
once you arrive on campus.

**Crisis Communication Day is brought to you by  
WCU's Public Relations Student Society of America  
Chapter; Catamount Communications, WCU's  
student-run PR firm; and the Public Relations  
Association of Western North Carolina.**

# CRISIS COMMUNICATION DAY



with Special Keynote Speaker:

## Rick Lyke

Senior Partner  
Eric Mower and Associates

## April 3, 2009

Ramsey Regional  
Activity Center  
on the campus of  
Western  
Carolina  
University

WCU PRSSA

## REGISTRATION/RECEPTION

Hospitality Room 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

**MICHAEL J. PALENCHAR, PH.D.**

Hospitality Room 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.



### “SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A CRISIS”

Crises and disasters are the definite challenges for public relations practitioners who work for organizations whose business, political or social missions involve managing health, safety and

environmental risks. The industrial and information ages have created a whole new range of crises while advances in communication and information technology have increased people’s awareness of these risks, as well as increasing the opportunities for dialogue and shared decision making based on strategic public relations, as well as associated political and social discussions. Part of this discussion includes the influence of traditional and non-traditional media, as well as social media – activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio – in the social construction of a crisis. As such, this workshop will discuss the social construction of crisis as a best practice element of public relations within the context of a case study related to the recent Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) fly and ash spill at the Kingston, TN, Fossil Plant on December 22, 2008, which sent 5.4 million cubic yards of toxic sludge into the Emory River and surrounding countryside.

Michael J. Palenchar is an Assistant Professor in Public Relations at the University of Tennessee’s School of Advertising and Public Relations, College of Communication and Information (Ph.D., University of Florida; M.A., University of Houston). Research interests include risk communication and issues management related to manufacturing, community relations and community awareness of emergency response protocols and manufacturing risks, community right-to-know issues, crisis communication, front groups, and general public relations. He has more than two decades of professional experience working in corporate, nonprofit, and agency environments, and he is also a risk communication and issues management research consultant for clients ranging from *Fortune 500* companies to local government and nongovernmental agencies.



## LUNCH - CATAMOUNT SPECIAL SALAD

Concourse 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER - RICK LYKE

Main Arena 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.



### “WHY DO WE ALWAYS GET TO DELIVER THE BAD NEWS?”

Just because it is bad news doesn’t mean that it is a crisis. A recent study found that nearly half of all senior executives report they have already experienced a crisis during

their careers and over half said it took more than a year for their businesses to recover. No one likes bad news. Most people recoil at the sign of negative information and go to great lengths to avoid delivering it. It’s up to public relations professionals to help their organizations avoid the “Death Strategy” and protect their reputations. How you react in the first few hours will ultimately determine how you are judged in the court of public opinion.

Rick Lyke has been with Eric Mower and Associates, one of the east coast’s largest independent marketing communications firms, for more than 25 years. He started in the firm’s Syracuse, N.Y., office in 1983, handling public relations assignments for Hathaway Shirts, Agway, Syracuse China and F.X. Matt Brewing. In 1996, he opened the agency’s Albany, N.Y., office where he managed accounts ranging from Empire State Development’s I Love New York campaign to Price Chopper Supermarkets. He moved in 2005 to EMA’s Charlotte, N.C., location where he is responsible for the company’s southeastern public relations operation. His clients in Charlotte include Bojangles’ Restaurants and CaroMont Health.

Lyke is a graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. He started his career as a newspaper reporter at the Oneida Daily Dispatch and continues to be an active freelance journalist, writing about beer, wine and spirits. He is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America and has been active with the group as a chapter president and assembly delegate.

## TOM JOHNSON/TAMMI HUDSON

Hospitality Room 2:00 - 3:15 p.m.

### “LESSONS LEARNED FROM A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS DRILL”

Tom Johnson, Western Carolina University Chief of Police, and Tammi Hudson, University Emergency Manager, will discuss the planning and implementation of a disaster preparedness drill on the WCU campus that was designed to simulate an “active shooter” incident in a campus residence hall.

The drill was part of WCU’s commitment to ensuring the safety of students, faculty and staff. In the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shootings of 2007, when a gunman killed 32 people, colleges and universities across the nation are taking a serious look at emergency preparedness.

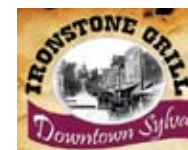
The drill also complied with a North Carolina Attorney General’s Task Force on Campus Safety recommendation.

This live exercise used role-players involved in simulated incidents occurring in real time and requiring an actual reaction from emergency responders and university officials. Equipment and human resources were activated and deployed as if the emergency really was happening.

The drill was made possible by a \$40,000 federal homeland security grant to the Jackson County Emergency Management Office to help law enforcement agencies, emergency responders and university officials evaluate existing crisis response plans, policies and procedures.

“This drill served as a valuable learning experience for all of us,” according to Johnson. “It is important that we understand how ready we are to respond to a life-threatening situation. We know that we won’t get everything right during the drill, but the point is to learn from any mistakes and correct them so that if we do face a real emergency, we are better prepared to deal with it.”

### Sponsors



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