

STOCKTON UNIVERSITY



PROCEDURE

News & Media Relations

Procedure Administrator: Executive Director of University Relations & Marketing

Authority: N.J.S.A. 18A:64-8

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Index Cross-References: Policy I-112

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Approved By: Dr. Harvey Kesselman, President

The public information function is performed by the Office of University Relations & Marketing ("URM"). This service is centralized in URM to facilitate the flow of information to the community through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, social media and other communications media. URM also serves as a communication resource for faculty and staff members who are directly contacted by reporters.

The best means of developing a good relationship with news media representatives is by providing honest information in an atmosphere of mutual respect and candor. To accomplish this relationship, URM needs the cooperation of all faculty and staff to provide to the media current newsworthy University information.

The following guidelines are provided to help determine what information URM needs to remain current on University developments and how faculty and staff must interact with representatives of the news media.

- Staff and faculty are urged to keep URM fully and promptly informed about events, incidents, and developments in which there is a current or potential public interest. In all matters, routine and potentially controversial, it is the responsibility of the University's Director of News & Media Relations to work with faculty and staff who are most directly involved in the matter to coordinate the release of news information, respond to inquiries from the news media and to offer guidance as requested or required.
- When a member of the faculty or staff is directly contacted by a news media representative to provide a comment on behalf of the University, the individual shall first inform the Director of News & Media Relations before responding to the media representative's questions. After the Director of News & Media Relations is informed, a decision will be made as to whether the individual or the Director of News & Media Relations will respond to the inquiry.
- If a decision is made for the faculty or staff member to respond directly to a media inquiry, URM recommends the following procedures:
 - The faculty or staff member shall obtain the reporter's name, contact information and affiliated publication, station or organization.

- In answering questions, the faculty or staff member shall be fair, friendly, and factual. The faculty or staff member also may ask to receive questions in advance of an interview.
- Normally, an individual is expected to comment only on matters within the individual's areas of expertise. However, if a reporter asks for a comment on a subject outside the individual's area of expertise, the individual shall so inform the reporter and refer the reporter to the Director of News & Media Relations who will refer the reporter to a University representative who is qualified to provide a response.
- When giving a personal opinion on any subject, the faculty or staff member must inform the reporter that they are providing a personal opinion and not speaking on behalf of the University or other faculty or staff members.
- The faculty or staff member must not assume that they will see the reporter's story before it is published or broadcast. The reporter is under no such obligation. If scientific or technical data are involved, the faculty or staff member may suggest that the reporter confirm accuracy with them, particularly if the reporter is not a writer specializing in the field.
- When an interview is for broadcast, faculty and staff are to be aware that radio and television news usually can report only the barest essentials of the story. The reporters are looking for distinct answers to one or two questions. It is best to avoid time-consuming details, long explanations, and complicated answers.
- Most reporters dislike material that is "off-the-record" as they may later receive the "off-the-record" information from another source. If for some reason, however, the faculty or staff member feels that they must make remarks "off-the-record," it must be done according to the following standards of journalistic ethics:
 - Each "off-the-record" statement must be prefaced by saying, "The following material is off-the-record."
 - The individual must indicate clearly to the reporter when they are "on-the-record."
 - Individuals cannot say belatedly, "The material I have just given you is off-the- record."
- After answering a press inquiry, faculty and staff members are to inform the Director of News & Media Relations about the reporter's questions and individual's responses. Staff who receive inquiries on matters relating to University policies or procedures must refer the inquiries to the Director of News & Media Relations.
- Inquiries must be referred to the Director of News & Media Relations when:
 - The inquiry deals with an area where responsibility lies with or is shared with another administrative area of the University.
 - The inquiry deals with a matter of University-wide

concern, policy or procedure. URM needs to be fully informed on developments in which the press has an interest. Preferably this is done before a reporter calls for information. By discussing the matter in advance, especially when a news report may be controversial, the faculty and staff member and URM can prepare a statement to respond to the inquiries. URM also will coordinate with other staff and faculty involved in the news-making event.

Requesting Coverage:

If faculty or staff seek news coverage for a specific event or issue, internally and/or externally, a request must be submitted to URM with the Service Request Form located on the University's University Relations & Marketing website. URM requests four weeks of advance notice to process, when possible. If there is a last-minute request for a press release or event coverage, staff and faculty are to contact the Director of News & Media Relations directly.

Review History:

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