



## Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure

**Subject:** Official University Communications

**Number:** UW SAP 12-6.2

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### I. PURPOSE

As a public institution of higher learning, the University of Wyoming has a responsibility and a commitment to disseminate information about its programs and activities, and to be responsive to media inquiries. Media coverage of the University's activities is one way the institution can receive positive visibility and support, while the University's prompt, fair and accurate public response to challenging issues can reassure its constituents and the general public. This policy defines the process for the release of official information to ensure that positions and statements of the University are represented accurately and consistently. It details how information about the University is announced to the public, the role of Institutional Marketing and Communications, and each employee's responsibility in the release of information to the media. All units of the University are expected to follow this policy.

The University recognizes both the inevitability of frequent media requests for faculty perspective and subject matter expertise, and the significant value of interactions with the media. This policy emphasizes the importance of faculty members clearly indicating that their responses to media inquiries reflect their own views, which may differ from those of the University.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Official University Communication:** An official University communication is any release, statement, or announcement that conveys or is intended to convey the official position of the University, a college or school, office or program, the leadership of the University or these subdivisions, or any employee speaking in the capacity of employment on matters of importance to the University, including but not limited to:

- A. Information about emergencies, crimes, or controversies;
- B. Statements regarding official positions on issues involving the University and other events to which the media have reasonable claim; and
- C. Press releases.

**Press Release:** An official statement issued to the media giving information on a particular matter.

### **III. POLICY**

#### **A. Official University Communication**

Institutional Marketing and Communications is the only office through which official University communications, as defined in this policy, may be issued to the media and to the general public.

Protocols for crafting and distributing public statements by the University regarding sensitive topics should be referenced in forming such statements.

#### **B. Promoting University Events, Activities, and Faculty Expertise through Media Contact**

##### **1. Press Releases**

Institutional Marketing and Communications is uniquely positioned to assist University offices, programs, centers, colleges and schools, and departments with proactively obtaining coverage of events and activities in the news media through press releases and other means. All University entities seeking media coverage for events and activities shall contact Institutional Marketing and Communications for coordination.

##### **2. Interview Requests**

All media contacts for interview requests or comment should be directed to Institutional Marketing and Communications, which will coordinate the University's response with appropriate administrators or employees, subject to the following exceptions:

Individuals who talk with the media as officials of the University, or as faculty or staff representing their responsibilities through the University, are encouraged to work with Institutional Marketing and Communications in advance. In instances when this is not possible, they should notify Institutional Marketing and Communications of the contact so the office can track the results.

The contribution of faculty and staff members' expertise in their fields to the public discourse supports the University's public, academic, and engagement mission, including through engagement with the media to provide information that is helpful to enriching the public's understanding of various topics. Faculty or staff who are contacted directly by the media to comment on issues pertaining to their area of expertise, but unrelated to specific activities of the University,

may comment without advance notice to Institutional Marketing and Communications, but should make the office aware of the contact. All faculty and staff who expect to share such information with the public through regular or periodic contact with the media are strongly encouraged to utilize media training and other resources that are made available by Institutional Marketing and Communications (see III.C).

### **C. Guidelines for Working with the Media**

All University employees who engage in contact with the media shall review the University's Guidelines for Working with the Media: <http://www.uwyo.edu/publicrelations/communications/guidelines-media.html> and the University of Wyoming Social Media Guidelines: <http://www.uwyo.edu/socialmedia/>.

Institutional Marketing and Communications representatives will be available to consult with administrators, faculty and staff about the most effective ways to work with the media.

### **D. Exceptions**

#### **1. General Exceptions**

Nothing in this Policy affects the responsibility of faculty members for their scholarly publications and personal involvement in community activities. The Policy also does not affect individual employees' rights to protected free speech including that which expresses personal views about University or non-University issues, as long as employees make it clear that they do so as individuals and they do not represent the official position of the University, either directly or indirectly.

#### **2. Representatives of Shared Governance Entities**

The responsibilities of shared governance require certain elected and appointed representatives to speak on behalf of their constituencies, including in communication with the media.

Communication with media by the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, or Associated Students of the University of Wyoming and their elected representatives are specifically exempted when they are speaking on behalf of their constituencies, about the positions of their respective bodies, or promoting their own events and activities.

While these entities are excluded from aspects of this policy for the purposes stated above, their representatives should be clear that statements are not

intended to represent the official positions of the University when engaging in such communication.

### **3. Intercollegiate Athletics**

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics manages media relations through its Media Relations Office. However, Institutional Marketing and Communications shall be consulted regarding responses to all significant issues that have the potential to reflect upon the image and reputation of the University.

**Responsible Division/Unit:** Institutional Marketing and Communications

**Source:** None

**Links:** <http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies>

**Associated Regulations, Policies, and Forms:** None

**Approved:** 10/18/2024