| Policy:<br>**Public relations/media relations** | |
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| Issuing Department**:**<br>**Public Relations and University Marketing** | |
| Date last revised:<br>**November 2005** | |

**PURPOSE**

This policy helps to ensure the university is represented with consistent messages and with one clear voice to all of its publics, both internal and external.

The Office of Public Relations and University Marketing offers and coordinates services to enhance the visibility and to accurately project the key messages and image of Western Oregon University through the judicious use of a variety of communications. These include news and feature releases, publications, the Web site, coordinated outreach activities, advertising and prompt response to media queries. The office is also responsible for the campus' integrated marketing planning and the university's institutional identity standards. Areas of public relations emphasis and thematic approaches in publication and advertising design correspond with the university's mission and goals.

**POLICY**

The Office of Public Relations and University Marketing is the official source of information for media representatives. All news releases on behalf of the university are issued by that office.

1. The release of information about university athletic programs and athletes is a responsibility of the sports information director, as directed by the office of public relations.

2. Cultural events (arts, music, theatre, lectures) and student-sponsored events open to the public are publicized by the office of public relations, working in coordination with a designated person within each area.

3. The information function is coordinated with members of the administration when media request information on (a) questions of policy or issues for which a spokesperson has been designated; (b) questions for which a university response has been prepared; (c) responses that require two or more university sources; and (d) campus safety reports.

4. In the event of a news story, from a minor negative happening to a rumor to a true crisis* situation, it is the job of public relations to:

- coordinate the flow of information to the media and concerned publics;
- assist university officials in preparing public statements, and
- assure that public information is made available accurately and in a timely manner.

5. In the event that other university officials are not available for comment, the director of public relations serves as the designated university spokesperson.

**A crisis is an unforeseen critical event, violent or non-violent, caused by nature, by accidents or by deliberate acts, about which the media and the public will expect information.*

**PROCEDURES**

In dealing with the news media, anyone is free to speak with the media at any time, except as noted in the policy above during a crisis* situation or about sensitive information. We ask that you contact the public relations office so we may:

- provide advice and/or assistance if you would like,
- answer the media query on your behalf if you wish,
- or follow up with the reporter to provide additional information/photos/etc.

1. Plans for publicizing events should include contact with the public relations office three to four weeks in advance.

2. Contact with the media will be initiated by the office of public relations to assure coordination of information.

3. When university personnel receive an inquiry from the media, responses should be coordinated with the office of public relations. Obtain the reporter's name, publication or station represented, phone number, nature of inquiry.

4. Refer media calls to the office of public relations when inquiries pertain to university policy, questions to which an official response has been prepared, or responses that require coordination among two or more administrative units.

5. Respond to media inquiries in a timely fashion by contacting the public relations office immediately or by returning a call to a reporter if it is appropriate to respond as noted above, and then letting the PR office know.
6. University faculty and staff should make clear to the media when not speaking in an official capacity.

*No employee is under any obligation to speak to members of the media and may always refer calls to the public relations office. If you wish to respond, it's always best to give yourself some time to think through your response by telling the reporter you will call*

*back in a specified amount of time…and then honoring that time frame. If a reporter pressures you with a deadline, that still entitles you to take a breath and call back or refer the call. If you do not wish to respond, please inform the PR office. It is not good practice to simply ignore a media query.*

**AUTHORITY**

Office of the President

**RESPONSIBILITY**

The Public Relations/Media Relations Policy and Procedures was reviewed by the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, ASWOU and President's Staff. The President's Staff adopted the policy in November 2005. The Office of Public Relations and University Marketing is responsible for campus-wide understanding of and compliance with this policy.

| Date of next review: **November 2010** |
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Alternate formats of this policy are available from the Office of Human Resources.