

Release of Information Policy

Summary

Columbus State University has a formal policy for faculty participation in public relations efforts at the institution.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for faculty participation in public relations efforts at Columbus State University.

Policy

1. Public Relations

Columbus State University seeks and attracts attention from the news media as an academic community of students, faculty, and staff and as a public institution.

Maintaining productive relationships with the people who report the news via newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet allows the university to realize public understanding of university people, policies, and programs. Providing honest and helpful information to reporters, in a timely manner, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and candor, helps the university develop and enhance positive media relations. The university's [policy on Relations with Representatives of News Media by Faculty](#) presents the specific guidelines and procedures for interacting with the media and the general public.

Faculty are to adhere to the guidelines below only when and if they do not impinge upon the tenets of academic freedom, to wit:

- Freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, and to speak or write without institutional discipline or restraint on matters of public concern as well as on matters related to professional duties and the functioning of the university.
- Academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that when one is speaking on matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution.

Relations with Representative of News Media by Faculty

1. The office of University Relations is the official source of information for media representatives and issues all news releases.
2. The release of information about university athletic programs and athletes is a responsibility of the sports information director.

3. The office of University Relations publicizes and promotes cultural, athletic and academic events throughout campus, working in coordination with a designated person within each area to promote those events to which the media or public would be invited.
4. Faculty members are encouraged to talk with members of the media on topics in which they can provide expertise. University Relations is available to assist as needed in these situations, but prior approval is not required. They would appreciate hearing about interviews so they can track media coverage of the university.
5. Media requests should be delegated to University Relations when media request information on (a) policy or issues for which a spokesperson has been designated; (b) items for which an “official” university response is needed; (c) issues that require two or more university sources; and (d) campus policy reports.
6. The university will carry out the provisions of the state regulations on public records, which define legal access to information by the media and others.

Procedures for Publicizing Events for the General Public

1. Plans for publicizing events should include contact with the University Relations office at least two weeks in advance.
2. University Relations will initiate contact with the media to assure coordination of information.
3. Refer media representatives to the University Relations office when inquiries pertain to university policy, questions to which an official response needs to be prepared, or responses that require coordination among two or more administrative units.
4. Respond to media inquiries in a timely fashion by referring them to University Relations or by returning a call to a reporter if it is appropriate to respond as noted within the media relations policy.
5. In a crisis situation, proceed as directed by the university's emergency procedures manual, copies of which are available in University Relations office, public safety, the president, vice presidents, and deans.
6. University faculty and staff should make clear to the media when not speaking in an official capacity.

Related USG Policy

10.1 Publicity

Last Update

July 5, 2016; July 7, 2017

Responsible Authority

University Relations