

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION</b> Marketing and Communications		<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> 223
<b>POLICY TITLE</b> Public/Media Relations		
<b>DATE OF REVISION</b> 12/3/24		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b> Senior Director of Marketing and Communications		<b>ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</b> Marketing and Communications

## PURPOSE

The public/media relations policy governs the public relations and media relations practices and guidelines for the University of South Carolina Beaufort.

## DEFINITIONS

**Academic unit:** Department, office, University Libraries. Within any academic unit, there may be academic sub-units such as departments, centers, and institutes.

**Administrative unit:** Administrative divisions such as Human Resources, Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, Administration and Finance. Within any administrative unit, there may be administrative sub-units such as departments, centers, and offices.

**Media Relations Director:** The Senior Director of Communications; serves as the primary contact providing strategic consulting and project coordination and serves as an entry point to all media relations management.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Marketing and Communications is to build, enhance and protect the University of South Carolina Beaufort brand and help provide a consistent brand experience across all university touch points. Marketing and Communications is the only unit authorized to disseminate press releases, media advisories or other information to media outlets on behalf of the university, Chancellor, or administrative units. The Senior Director of Communications and the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications act as the primary university spokespersons. Those individuals designated as University Officers may also speak on behalf of the university when appropriate.

With approval from the Senior Director of Communications, academic and administrative units may engage in their own public/media relations program/initiatives to promote and create awareness of programs, research, student and faculty excellence, innovations within their disciplines and other areas that advance the reputation of the unit and the university. Those activities must be conducted in compliance with policies enumerated here and within the context

of a strategic communications plan approved by Marketing and Communications. As a best practice, the Senior Director of Communications should be apprised of unit public/media relations activities.

Marketing and Communications retains sole responsibility for all crisis communications activities along with the reputational management of all situations and inquiries that might reflect negatively on the university, any component unit, university employees or students.

#### A. Public/Media Relations

1. Public/media relations activities include: arranging interviews and media placements; issuing news releases about events, programs and research; event promotion; and planning news conferences. All information shared with the media and public must be accurate, timely and consistent.

2. For the protection of students, faculty and staff, academic and administrative units must immediately refer media questions about the following to the Senior Director of Communications because they may pertain to legally protected information:

- a. legal, ethical or personnel issues involving the university, its employees or students; or
- b. questions or issues that may result in harm to others; or
- c. student information or other requests for information or data that may violate Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or other laws or university policies; or,
- d. a campus crisis or emergency.

Such media inquiries will be managed by Marketing and Communications in consultation with appropriate university offices including but not limited to: the Chancellor, General Counsel, Department of Public Safety, Human Resources, Provost, Chancellor, Student Development, department chairs or other appropriate campus authorities.

Referrals can be made by faculty and staff directly or through established unit procedures, e.g., unit leadership or other appropriate persons.

3. Marketing and Communications will assist in coordinating media interviews given by USCB faculty and staff and will be available to offer guidance and support before, during and after interviews.

4. Faculty and staff are encouraged to speak to reporters on matters related to their areas of expertise, such as their research, scholarship, teaching or professional experience.

When communicating with a reporter, personal opinions, as opposed to subject matter expertise, should be clearly identified as such.

- a. When speaking to news media, members of the USCB community should notify their unit leadership and Marketing and Communications in advance of the interview. This allows for tracking and promotion of the stories in which students, faculty or staff are featured.
- b. Faculty seeking assistance with placement or additional promotion of the placement of op-eds or articles must share them with their unit leadership and Marketing and Communications in advance of publication.
- c. Staff, when identified as employees of the university in op-eds or other articles for publication, should share them with their unit leadership and Marketing and Communications in advance of publication.
- d. Administrators and staff, if representing the university, must notify their unit leadership and Marketing and Communications when submitting op-eds or other articles for publication.
- e. Marketing and Communications and unit leaderships may edit written content submitted for release to the media as necessary to conform to accepted journalistic style and standards, e.g., AP Style.

5. News media are permitted to enter public areas of the university campus without permission but are encouraged to contact Marketing and Communications beforehand, so staff may help facilitate visits to campus.

- a. Access to academic buildings and offices can be granted by appropriate unit leadership. Faculty members may invite news media to their offices but should make unit leadership and Marketing and Communications aware of the interview. Marketing and Communications must be notified of any news media on campus.
- b. All media requests to enter student spaces, e.g. Campus Center, or other non-academic, non-residence hall spaces must be coordinated with the Senior Director of Communications.
- c. All media requests to enter campus student housing are prohibited without prior permission from the Senior Director of Communications or the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications.

6. All media requests filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) must be immediately forwarded to the Senior Director of Communications. See also USC policy [UNIV 2.00 Freedom of Information](#).

7. Vendors or contractors engaged to assist in public/media relations for a unit must coordinate with the Senior Director of Communications prior to beginning work. Vendors must also be an approved vendor as described in USC policy [COMM 4.00 Vendors and Outsourcing](#).

## PROCEDURES

### A. Communications Guidelines and Resources

#### 1. Unit Coordination – Roles and Responsibilities

##### Academic Units:

a. Leadership ensures adherence to policy and coordinates media/public relations efforts with Marketing and Communications, including sharing external media pitches and releases. Leadership will consult with Marketing and Communications as necessary and will serve as the singular point of contact on the unit's behalf.

##### Administrative Units:

a. Leadership ensures adherence to policy and coordinates media/public relations efforts with Marketing and Communications, including sharing external media pitches and releases. Leadership will consult with Marketing and Communications as necessary and will serve as the singular point of contact on the unit's behalf.

2. Brand Toolbox — All procedures, brand guidelines and resources related to the marketing and communications activities outlined in the policy are posted on the Brand Toolbox located on the university's website: [uscb.edu/faculty-and-staff/marketing-toolbox.html](https://uscb.edu/faculty-and-staff/marketing-toolbox.html)

a. Marketing and Communications will periodically revise, update and expand on brand identity guidelines and marketing resources posted on the Brand Toolbox.

b. Individuals and groups responsible for the creation of marketing and promotional materials should check the Brand Toolbox frequently to ensure that communications are in compliance with all guidelines.

3. Professional Development Activities — Ongoing professional development activities ensure that units are prepared to produce materials that are consistent, professional and immediately recognizable as USCB in both presentation and content.

a. Appropriate unit staff should attend training sessions and utilize online resources offered by Marketing and Communications to familiarize communicators with the

university’s brand platform and visual identity guidelines.

If this policy does not cover what you are looking for, please contact the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications.

**RELATED UNIVERSITY AND STATE POLICIES**

- [UNIV 2.00 Freedom of Information](#)
- [COMM 4.0 Vendors and Outsourcing policy](#)

**HISTORY OF REVISIONS**

Date of Revision	Reason for Revision
December 3, 2024	