

## **Media Relations Policy for Faculty and Staff The University of the South**

### *Objectives:*

- to ensure consistency in communications with news media from across the University;
- to help maintain the high level of credibility the University enjoys in its dealings with the media; and
- to protect the reputation of the University, its students and employees.

### *Rationale:*

Stories about people and projects in the news media can illuminate the University's educational mission, advancing communications strategies designed to raise awareness by the public of the intellectual and cultural resources on campus and of opportunities to be engaged in the life of the University. The news media also are important conduits of news and information during crisis and emergencies. The University values its relationships with the news media and recognizes the value of engaging reporters, editors, broadcasters, and internet content providers in communicating about the University to mass audiences.

The Office of Marketing and Communications is the chief point of contact between the University and the news media. Through its media relations services, the Office seeks to serve the University's purpose statement by providing honest, timely and useful information to all its internal and external stakeholders and audiences, and by helping the university understand, anticipate, and manage its environment.

### *Implementation:*

The Office of Marketing and Communications assists journalists with inquiries about the University and provides counsel to faculty, staff, and students in managing and working with the news media. All inquiries from the media should as a matter of course be directed or reported to Marketing and Communications (for the College, Laurie Saxton, [lsaxton@sewanee.edu](mailto:lsaxton@sewanee.edu), ext. 1896, and for the School of Theology, Mary Ann Patterson, [mapatter@sewanee.edu](mailto:mapatter@sewanee.edu), ext. 1577). In most cases, the Office will recommend a spokesperson to speak on behalf of specific issues or news. For example, subject to their availability and interest, faculty members may be asked to serve as expert sources for news stories relating to the faculty member's academic area of expertise.

In some cases, typically crises and other sensitive issues, the Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, or his/her designee, serves as the University spokesperson and is responsible for speaking on behalf of the University.

Likewise, all outreach to the news media in the form of press releases, press advisories, pitch letters and other vehicles shall be managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications.

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