

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

Approved by: Northeastern State University Executive Cabinet Responsible Official: Communications and Marketing hardcast@nsuok.edu	History: Adopted – November 26, 2013 Revised – Related Policies: FERPA Media Resource Guide Annex B of the NSU Emergency Operations Plan Additional References: Consent Form Clery Act Oklahoma Open Records Act (51 O.S. '24a.1 et seq.)
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [100.00 Policy](#)
- [200.00 General procedures for dealing with media](#)
- [300.00 Declared Campus Emergency](#)
- [400.00 Public Reputation Crisis](#)
- [500.00 NSU Media Resource Guide/ProfNet Database](#)
- [600.00 Op-Ed Program](#)
- [700.00 Event Publicity](#)
- [800.00 Success Profiles](#)
- [900.00 Contact information: NSU Communication Team](#)
- [1000.00 Submitting Media Reports](#)

Northeastern State University Communications & Marketing department is the place to start when you receive a call from a reporter, see camera crews on campus or have a university-related news story to publicize. Contact us as soon as possible to ensure effective and coordinated media outreach.

NSU Communications & Marketing works to raise the national and international reputation of the institution through increasing coverage of its news to what is “newsworthy”—people, places and accomplishments—in key publications and specialty media. The media team also helps protect the reputation, intellectual property, privacy and position of faculty, staff and students.

Effective communications with the media are critical to Northeastern’s ability to carry out its mission and promote continued public support for the university. Effective media relations best serve the university by:

- informing the public of the value of the credentials and other services that we provide
- promoting the university's achievements, activities and events of significance
- sharing the stories of our accomplished and diverse faculty, staff and students
- expanding the general visibility of the university

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

- ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents and issues of a controversial and/or sensitive nature
- advancing the broad goals of increasing the number of applications from qualified potential students and promoting student retention and graduation.

100.00 POLICY

The President and Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing serve as the official university spokespersons and convey the official university position on issues of general university-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature. Inquiries from the media about such issues should be referred to the office of Communications & Marketing for dissemination to these individuals.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the president and the Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing can designate another university administrator to serve as spokesperson on a particular issue.

In cases of critical significance to the university, including declared emergencies or in a public relations crisis, the Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing will work with the Director of Communications & Marketing, Media Relations staff, Director of Public Safety and/or Incident Management Team and other university officials to detail the known facts of the situation and respond appropriately.

In such situations, all campus departments should refer calls from the media to the Director of Communications or Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media.

200.00 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Members of the faculty and staff are free to respond to requests from the media regarding their research, scholarship, teaching or professional expertise. In such cases, the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media and Media Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible to inform them of the contact. Such notification can be particularly important if follow-up inquiries are made with other university personnel to ensure a coordinated, consistent university response. Media inquiries should be referred to the Director of Communications if they involve issues with university-wide significance and/or are of a controversial or sensitive nature. Please be sure to request copies or links of any published content and forward them to the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media and Media Coordinator who are responsible for monitoring and tracking the progress of all NSU-related stories.

All releases intended for off-campus or external audiences should be routed through the Office of Communications & Marketing for review and release to the media.

Since positive media solicitation is an integral element of the university's communications program, any ideas for articles or pieces that would positively portray the university, its work or its community should also be directed to Communications & Marketing. In a similar manner, C&M should be notified about negative occurrences that are likely to rise to the level of a news story.

Inquiries from the NSU student newspaper, the Northeastern, do not necessitate notification of the Communications & Marketing Department. Inquiries regarding NSU athletics should be referred to the Athletic Department.

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

Guidelines for responding to the media when the issue is non-controversial and limited to the faculty/staff member's area of expertise:

- Obtain the name of the person calling, the media organization and, if available, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast. This information should be included when the notification is made to the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media and Media Coordinator.
- The best approach with the media is to be prompt, helpful and honest. All contacts from the media should be returned as soon as possible, in deference to reporters' deadlines. If that is not possible, an alternate employee (if appropriate) or Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media should be asked to handle the call.
- Make sure you understand each question from the media before answering. If you cannot answer the question, or are uncomfortable providing a response, take the reporter's number and advise him/her that someone who can provide the information will contact him/her as soon as possible. Then follow up by contacting the appropriate media specialist or the Executive Director of Public Relations & Marketing.
- Do not offer speculations or gossip. Do not answer a reporter's question with a simple "no comment." Be considerate and respectful and make sure the reporter understands your responses. Provide your phone number and/or email address for follow-up questions.
- Remember when you respond to the media, you will be seen as representing and speaking for the university. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such by using phrases such as "I'm not speaking for the University on this," or "This is my personal opinion."
- Subjects/topics that should not be discussed with reporters are:
 - 1) legal issues
 - 2) personnel issues
 - 3) questions that involve university integrity, such as ethics or issues that may result in harm to others
 - 4) a campus crisis or emergency. Refer all such inquiries to the Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing or the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- University Police shall release police reports in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Records Act.
- Any media inquiries that involve information about specific students should be directed to the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Such inquiries will be handled in strict compliance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**. This federal law protects the confidentiality of a student's education record.
- Only "Directory Information" can be released, which consists of the following information and is subject to change provided the change is effective only at the subsequent year (i.e., fall term) and provided the change(s) is/are appropriately publicized.
 - Student's name, mailing address, and telephone number
 - Date and place of birth
 - Classification and enrollment status
 - Major field of study
 - Gender
 - Dates of attendance at Northeastern State University (i.e. an academic year, a spring semester, or a first quarter)
 - Most recent previous school attended
 - Degrees, honors and awards received

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Photograph
- Email address assigned/provided by the institution or provided to the university by the student
- Remove this bullet
- Media inquiries regarding NSU faculty or staff should be referred to the office of Human Resources. As a State Entity, NSU is bound by the [Oklahoma Open Records Act, 51 O.S. §24A.1 et seq.](#) The Oklahoma Open Records Act provides that records which come into the possession of a public body are subject to the Open Records Act unless there is a statutory exception and therefore prohibits most information from remaining confidential. As such, NSU complies with open records requests to the extent allowed by law.

300.00 DECLARED CAMPUS EMERGENCY

At the onset of all emergency situations, a determination should be made if the incident requires a timely notification to the campus community under the [Clery Act](#).

Proper media communications during an emergency can have a direct impact on the success or failure of the emergency response and recovery and have a lasting impact on institutional reputation and public support. This is especially true when the news media is the primary means of communication to our constituencies.

The Emergency Procedures of Northeastern State University state:

“The authority to declare and end a university state of emergency rests with the University President or his/her designee. The University President/designee, in consultation with the University Incident Management Team (IMT), serves as the overall incident command during any minor emergency, major emergency or disaster. The following definitions of an emergency are provided as guidelines to assist university community response. Any emergency should be reported to University Police Department as soon as possible.

(1) Minor Incident (NIMS Type 5 Event): Any incident, potential or actual, which will not seriously affect the overall functional capacity of the university (examples- medical calls, accidents, alarms).

(2) Major Incident (NIMS Type 4 Event): Any incident, potential or actual, which affects an entire building or buildings, and which will disrupt the overall operations of the university. Outside emergency services will likely be required, as well as, major efforts from university support services. Major policy considerations and decisions will usually be required from the university administration during times of crisis. In all cases of major emergencies, an Incident Command Post may be activated, and the appropriate support and operational plans will be executed (examples- football games, concerts, commencements).

(3) Disaster (NIMS Type 1-3 Event): Any event or occurrence which has taken place and has seriously impaired or halted the operations of the university. In some cases, mass casualties and severe property damage may be sustained. A coordinated effort of all university resources is required to effectively control the situation. Outside emergency services will be essential. In all cases of disaster, an Incident Command Post will be activated, and the appropriate support and operational plans will be executed (examples- tornado, flood, natural disaster, terrorism).

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

Public Relations and Marketing Staff will refer to [Annex B of the NSU Emergency Operations Plan](#) in the event of a declared emergency.

The Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing, in coordination with the Director of Communications and the IMT are responsible for the development and dissemination of all university communications in the event of a declared campus emergency. This includes internal communications with students, faculty and staff, as well as communications with the general public through external media and campus-generated social media.

The priority will be on maintaining accurate, timely and open communications with the media, providing information that has been confirmed by the IMT regarding the emergency situation and the university's response to it.

Communications with the media will be timely throughout the duration of the emergency situation. The NSU website, social media and the Campus Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be utilized as key mediums for updating our campus community and the public on the details of the emergency situation and actions we are taking to address all related issues.

The Executive Director and Director of Public Relations & Marketing will work with the Director of Public Safety and members of the IMT to keep the media and university community informed regarding the emergency. Please refer to the Emergency Procedure manual for more information.

A Joint Information Center (JIC) will be established in the event of a major widespread campus incident/disaster. The media center will include workspace for media personnel, electricity, telephones, Internet connections, campus and community directories and maps. A media pool of representatives from print and broadcast media outlets may be appointed to discuss and communicate protocols regarding media access.

In any situation, faculty, staff and students have a right not to speak with the media if it is their desire. The media has access only to the public areas of the campus. Any situations where individuals feel a reporter has abused their rights should be reported to the Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing.

A **Call Center** can also be established, if a high volume of incoming phone calls from the public are expected.

400.00 PUBLIC REPUTATION CRISIS

Non-emergency and non-disaster events may sometimes occur that could potentially have a lasting impact on institutional reputation and public support. In these circumstances it is important to be fully prepared.

The Executive Director of Public Relations & Marketing, in coordination with the Director of Communications has primary responsibility for providing accurate and timely information to the appropriate university audiences in response to situations that may create a negative media or public reaction.

These audiences include crisis victims and their families (if applicable), students, faculty and staff, surrounding community members, board members, student's parents, alumni, donors and prospective donors, government officials, prospective students, and media.

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

500.00 NSU MEDIA RESOURCE GUIDE/PROFNET DATABASE

Northeastern is responsible for connecting the news media (radio, newspaper, magazine, television, Web, etc.) with knowledgeable faculty and staff sources. Individuals listed in our [Media Resource Guide](#) have agreed to be available for such interviews. Contact C&M if you are interested in being listed in this important resource guide.

600.00 OP-ED PROGRAM

Op-ed essays are written by experts and published on the page opposite or near the editorial page in newspapers. Publication of op-eds written by faculty can call attention to the quality of NSU faculty and indirectly acknowledge the quality of the academic program. These articles cast a valuable spotlight on faculty expertise and their ability to articulate strong opinions held on timely topics. NSU Communications & Marketing can assist faculty in placing op-ed articles in local, statewide, and national newspapers. Regularly working with op-ed editors, C&M staff remains up-to-date on current trends in editorial newsrooms and has current contact information for the major op-ed editors.

Op-eds appear in general-circulation newspapers and are designed for all audiences. The writing level of an op-ed page can be slightly above that of news pages, but not much higher. C&M staff can assist faculty by providing editing advice and information about journalistic style. Op-eds need to follow the Associated Press Stylebook and accepted journalistic writing practices, which are different from the requirements of academic journals. C&M staff also can be helpful in suggesting topics, narrowing a topic, editing, rewriting and other areas.

Faculty who are interested in writing op-eds are encouraged to contact the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media or the Media Coordinator at 918-444-2851.

700.00 EVENT PUBLICITY

Calendar listings are prepared for all public events held on campus. Information and photos for calendar entries should be submitted as soon as the event details are firm in order to meet print media deadlines for larger publications and magazines. Information for the Calendar of Events can be sent by email to marcom@nsuok.edu.

800.00 SUCCESS PROFILES

C&M is diligently working to “tell the stories” of outstanding faculty, staff, students and alumni at Northeastern State University. If you have a lead regarding a Northeastern individual who has an interesting story to share (about being tops in their field, volunteer activities, ability to overcome hardships during their education, how NSU helped that individual Gather Here. Go Far., etc.), please contact the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media at 918-444-2851 or the Media Coordinator at 918-444-2881.

Media Policy Guidelines

Internal

900.00 CONTACT INFORMATION: NSU COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING TEAM

Ben Hardcastle – Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing

hardcast@nsuok.edu

918-444-2017

Jennifer Zehnder – Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media

zehnder@nsuok.edu

918-444-2851

Cassandra Brubaker – Media Coordinator

brubaker@nsuok.edu

918-444-2881

Pete Henshaw – University Photographer

henshaw@nsuok.edu

918-444-2889

Athletics

Scott Pettus – Assistant Director of Athletics/External Operations

pettusr@nsuok.edu

918-444-3955

1000.00 SUBMITTING MEDIA REPORTS

The Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media is the principal contact between NSU and media representatives on all three campuses. The Assistant Director of Athletics/External Operations is the principal contact for media athletic inquiries. If you have a media contact you need to discuss, or wish to share details of upcoming events, or positive news stories about the university, please contact the Assistant Director of Communications for Creative Services, Marketing & Media.