

# MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES



Owner	CT State Strategic Marketing and Communications
Scope	All Employees, including Student Employees; limited applicability to emeriti
Applicability	All Campuses and College Office
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## Background

CT State's Strategic Marketing and Communications Department is the institution's primary voice and official liaison to the news media and as such provides timely, accurate and newsworthy information about the college to media outlets.

CT State Media and Public Relations, an arm of the Strategic Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for initiating, developing and maintaining effective, productive and beneficial relations with the news media in communicating college news and in responding to media requests. It is responsible for coordinating and delivering official college comment on all matters regarding the college through mainstream and new media. This includes proactive statements, interactions, responses to requests, arranging interviews, visual productions, and coordinating press conferences. The office supports CT State priorities and promotes programs, achievements and initiatives.

## Purpose

These guidelines were established to describe the college's position with respect to interacting with news media representatives. For the purpose of these guidelines, news media shall refer to representatives of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online outlets, television and radio.

The college's media guidelines' primary purposes are:

- Ensuring consistent, accurate and ethical communication with the media, protecting the college's reputation and interests while fostering positive relationships.
- Reflecting the college's values and mission, and amplifying stories that may be larger than just one campus.
- Promoting transparency and accountability in its interactions with the media.
- Building trust and relationships with the media, fostering more accurate and fair reporting.
- Complying with relevant laws and regulations related to communication and media relations.

## **Primary Spokepersons**

The following individuals are recognized as the primary spokesperson for the college. All spokespersons, regardless of position, are expected to follow the media relations process below.

- College President
- Chief of Staff
- Director of Media and Public Relations
- Campus Presidents

Campus Presidents or their designee have the autonomy to serve as campus spokespersons. Media and Public Relations can provide support with response, messaging, media engagement and follow-up. Depending on the sensitivity of the inquiry, or if it is of a college-wide nature, the Chief of Staff may serve as the spokesperson for the college.

## **Secondary Spokepersons**

There will be occasions when a response to a media inquiry may be best delivered by someone other than a primary spokesperson. In these cases, a primary spokesperson may request that a secondary spokesperson 'take the call.' Examples of this may be a faculty content expert, or the Vice President of Enrollment Management re: enrollment growth.

- Provost (academics, student programs, workforce development)
- Vice Presidents (functional areas)
- School Deans (academics)
- Others, as designated

In all cases, it is recommended that internal or external media training be provided to any members of college leadership who can be reasonably expected to be contacted by members of the media or assigned to a media response.

## **Processes**

Media and Public Relations serves as the central point of contact in coordinating all news and information to be released by the college to the news media. To ensure consistent and timely communications with media outlets:

1. CT State Marketing requests of campuses and CT State leadership that Media and Public Relations be notified of any occurrence that could result in media attention. This includes media requests and news items, as well as FOI requests that could potentially result in media coverage.
2. CT State Media and Public Relations will encourage the news media to contact its office when seeking information or comment from the college.
3. The Director of Media and Public Relations will share with the Chief of Staff information about any media requests received.
4. When the news media requests information or comment, the Director of Media and Public Relations will recommend to the Chief of Staff who is the most appropriate person to speak to the issue at-hand.
5. In instances where an official college statement or comment is requested or is in the best interests of the college, the Director of Media and Public Relations will work with the appropriate administrator, staff or faculty member to develop the statement, clear it as necessary with leadership, and release the statement to the news media. In some instances where appropriate, CT State Media and Public Relations will recommend if it is necessary to refer a request to CSCU External Affairs.
6. When information not requiring an official college statement is requested, the Director of Media and Public Relations will gather and provide the information to the news media, or will direct the reporter to the appropriate department or individual (with functional approval).
7. When reporters request an interview with a college official, CT State Media and Public Relations is available and coordinate the interview.
8. When members of the news media contact individual faculty, staff or administrators for comment regarding college matters, they are asked to alert the Director of Media and Public Relations before responding. It is OK for faculty or staff to tell the media that they will need to get back to them. At the campus level, staff members should also notify their campus president. CT State Media and Public Relations, in coordination with other senior leadership as appropriate, will evaluate the request and determine the best course of action moving forward.
9. These guidelines do not invalidate the faculty's right to address the news media on issues unrelated to college policy or official business. The college welcomes media inquiries that seek expert opinion from faculty and staff. Faculty comments to the news media are only subject to prior review by the administration if the intention is to address official college policy or to speak officially on behalf of the college. In such instances, faculty should notify CT State Media and Public Relations and their campus president to ensure proper coordination of the college's response. Any questions that fall outside

of a faculty member's academic interest or expertise should involve consultation with college Media and Public Relations.

10. In instances where faculty and staff are contacted by the news media on non-policy issues, the Director of Media and Public Relations is available on request to provide support and assistance.

## **Op-Ed and Bylined Articles**

A specific process has been established for faculty, staff and emeritus employees who wish to draft op-ed pieces or bylined articles to be published in popular news media (including news aggregators and news websites) and will be indicating their affiliation with CT State in the attribution of the piece.

1. Author should make initial contact with Media and Public Relations to discuss subject matter for op-ed piece. Subject matter should be timely, relate to a current news topic, and focus on some aspect of the faculty member's education, activities, research, or community impact. CT State approves subject matter (with input from leadership as appropriate), and reviews potential outlets for the piece.
2. If subject is approved, employee/emeritus drafts op-ed piece (with assistance of Strategic Marketing as needed to ensure newsworthiness and that it adheres to op-ed guidelines established by the news organization).
3. CT State Media and Public Relations provides edits and works with author to produce a final version of the piece.
4. Once approved, CT State will work with author to submit piece to news organization, and coordinate if additional submissions are required.

NOTE: If a faculty or staff member determines that they will submit an op-ed piece or bylined article WITHOUT attribution from CT State, they may do so on their own personal time.

## **Campus News**

For smaller news items that are only for local media distribution, those campuses that plan to send news releases under the direction of the campus president should share the release with CT State Media and Public Relations to determine if the item should be shared with the state Public Information Office (PIO) distribution list. Additionally, any campus news planned should be evaluated for applicability to other campuses or functional areas of the college.

## **Responsibilities**

- College employees must adhere to relevant CT State policies as well as all federal, state and local laws and policies regarding the release of information about activities of the college, or its employees, students, alumni, volunteers, or research subjects, including those that apply to privacy such as FERPA.

- The college reaffirms its continuing commitment to the principles of academic freedom and its protections as set forth by CT State Community College, and the right to freedom of speech protected by the United States and Connecticut Constitutions.
- It is the responsibility of each department head to implement procedures to comply with these guidelines, while also ensuring that academic freedom, free inquiry and freedom of expression within the academic community are respected and observed.
- Those interactions with the media that strictly comprise an employee's personal opinion require that the employee state such to the media to ensure that it clear that the opinion expressed is solely that of the employee and does not reflect the opinions or beliefs of the college and its affiliates.