
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

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A GUIDE TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDIA POLICY

This guidance document has been designed to assist members of the university community with the practical application of the [Media Policy](#). Questions relating to this policy should be addressed to the [Office of Media Relations](#) at 202-994-6460.

Practical Application of the Policy.

Requests from the media should be coordinated with the Office of Media Relations to best facilitate, follow up, and determine the scope of interviews and logistics. Faculty and staff are also asked to coordinate with the Office of Media Relations for all media placements, including op-eds, letters to the editors and other postings or submissions.

Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff and Coaches. Department of Athletics and Recreation staff and coaches should report all media inquiries to the Executive Director of Athletics Communications or their respective athletics communications contact before making statements to the news media. Guidelines for student-athletes are provided in the [Student- Athlete Handbook](#).

Practical Application of the Policy for Crisis Situations. The Division of External Relations is committed to taking a proactive approach to crisis communications efforts, using disclosure whenever possible to prevent or minimize adverse public relations situations. The university has made a concerted effort to increase transparency on key campus issues, with crisis communications planning included in the effort to build openness and accountability.

To assist in providing consistent and accurate information, no one is authorized to speak to the news media on behalf of the university in a crisis or in response to a significant event without clearance from the Assistant Vice President for Media Relations, Associate Vice President for Communications or the Vice President for External Relations, or their designees.

The Division of External Relations, in consultation with the crisis communications team, is responsible for developing and implementing crisis communications strategies. Responsibilities include:

- Gathering and verifying information
- Assessing the severity of the situation
- Determining if the situation meets the definition of a crisis and necessitates activating the crisis communications plan
- Identifying audiences who should be informed
- Developing strategies for how information is to be released
- Determining who should speak on behalf of the university and preparing them for their roles
- Developing messages and vehicles for delivering the messages
- Providing facts and minimizing rumors

Final approval of these strategies in specific situations will rest with the university's president or designee or the vice president for external relations or designee. The Division of External Relations will maintain regular contact with the president, vice presidents, deans, directors, department heads, University Police Department, and faculty, staff and student leaders. Each person/unit has a responsibility to advise the Vice President for External Relations, Associate Vice President for Communications and/or the Assistant Vice President for Media Relations when internal or external issues or developments appear likely to need a communications plan. Similarly, the Division of External Relations is responsible for communicating to the GW community and general public, as appropriate, internal and external issues or developments that may escalate or have escalated to crisis status.

The purpose of alerting external relations to a crisis situation is not to trigger review or adjudication processes, but instead to address the communications concern. Any review or adjudication will be conducted separately as outlined by university policies and procedures. The Assistant Vice President for Media Relations or designee will monitor local, state and national news coverage of higher education to determine problematic trends that GW can avoid or plan for GW's response to similar scenarios.