Media Relations Policy

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General Description

Policy Summary:

Strategic Communications and Marketing (SCM) has primary responsibility for media relations at Trinity University. The Media Relations Policy ("Policy") establishes how faculty and staff are to respond to, and/or request news media coverage for Trinity University, its departments, schools, units, or individual members. This Policy also recognizes the Academic Freedom of faculty members as they respond to and/or access news media.

Purpose:

Trinity University ("University") is committed to the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, ideas, and expertise from its thought leaders and program promoters. This requires an ongoing and strategic approach to engagement with the news media to reach a variety of local, regional, national, and international audiences. The University must be equipped to effectively manage communications in response to crises as they arise.

This policy outlines procedures for publicizing University programs, events, and achievements, and establishes protocols for interaction with the news media to ensure consistent, accurate, and strategic communication on behalf of Trinity University.

Scope:

This policy applies to all faculty and staff employees who engage with news media as part of their role at Trinity University or who may receive interview requests.

Exceptions:

This Policy does not apply to University Experts (faculty and staff) who, as *individuals*, may offer their opinions, views, and expertise without risk of official interference or professional disadvantage. University Experts do not speak as representatives of the University.

Responsible Department:

Strategic Communications & Marketing

Policy Content

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University departments, schools, units, and individual members of the Trinity Community seeking to publicize a program or an event or achievement must contact the Public Information Officer (PIO). As the University's interface with the media, the PIO has access to news media contacts and will work to initiate and coordinate coverage for programs, events, or newsworthy items.

It is the responsibility of the PIO to respond to news media requests in a timely manner and to manage those interactions to completion.

If the media contacts a staff member or a department directly, the PIO should be notified immediately. Depending on the nature of the request, the PIO will determine, along with appropriate parties within the University, whether to respond to the request. At no point should information or responses be offered to the media without the PIO's involvement and approval.

If the media is invited to campus to cover or attend an event (via press release, individual invitation, or group invitation), the event disclaimer must be included in the invitation.

Prior to media being invited to campus, the PIO or Public Relations Manager must be contacted in order to assist in the coordination of the event and to assess any media considerations that should be evaluated.

The University will try to accommodate all reasonable media requests but reserves the right to not comment or respond if the request is contrary to University policies, especially those that ensure student privacy or involve human resource or legal issues.

If an event draws media attention and the University elects to respond, all press releases and media statements will be developed and disseminated by the media relations team. If a press conference is deemed necessary, SCM is the only department on campus authorized to call a press conference. The one exception is Athletics, which is allowed to convene news conferences on matters related to intercollegiate athletics.

Faculty and staff who would like to invite media to campus for events, courses, or other opportunities for coverage must coordinate the invitation with the PIO or PR Manager. Members of the media giving course lectures, class symposia, and other academic contributions do not need to coordinate the invitation through the PIO or PR Manager.

While on University property, news media representatives must be accompanied by the PIO or designated media relations staff member.

Media statements regarding University-wide issues and policies will be issued by the University Spokesperson or designee. The University President or VPSCM may designate another University representative to serve as Spokesperson as appropriate.

Faculty who are directly contacted by news media related to their research, scholarship, teaching or professional expertise are encouraged to coordinate through the PIO, although they are not required to do so. The University recognizes the centrality of academic freedom to the role of a university.

It is the responsibility of each department to implement and share procedures to comply with this policy, while ensuring that academic freedom and freedom of expression within the academic community are protected.

The University complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding the retention and release of personal and/or educational records of all current employees and students, and it complies with all privacy and security laws including FERPA

Terms & Definitions

Terms and Definitions:

Term:	Definition:
News Media	All members of the press and their respective organizations, including newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online media, social media, television, and radio
University Experts	Faculty and staff who agree to be available to discuss their areas of expertise with the news media. University Experts may share their affiliation with the University, but they do not speak on behalf of Trinity University, nor do they represent the University as an entity.
Spokesperson	Individual designated to convey official responses and crisis communication messaging on behalf of the University. The Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing (SCM) serves as the designated University Spokesperson. The VPSCM may designate others to speak on behalf of the University.
Public Information Officer (PIO)	Individual designated to interface with the news media, whether proactively in seeking coverage or reactively in responding to media inquiries in a timely manner. The Public Relations Manager is the designated University PIO. If the PIO is unavailable, the University Spokesperson or their designee will respond to and handle media inquiries in a timely manner.
Media Relations Team	Individuals designated to manage media issues, as directed by the PIO.

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

Revision #:	Date:	Recorded By:
v.1	7/14/2025 4:05 PM	Pamela Mota

Vice President Approval:

Name:	Title:
Tom Evelyn	Vice President for Strategic Communications & Marketing