2105 – College Response to Media Requests

The Public Relations Department is the official point of contact for disseminating information to the public. All information to be disseminated must be approved and coordinated by the Director of Public Relations (or designee). The President and Director of Public Relations are the only employees authorized to make direct contact with the news media and serve as spokes person for the College, with the exception of athletic information provided by the Sports Information Officer or a spokesperson designated by the President or Director of Public Relations. Other procedures are as follows:

If contacted by the media, employees may choose, if they wish, to answer questions pertaining to their area of employment, remembering that they are acting as a representative of the College by doing so. Employees are to be accurate, exercise restraint, and show respect for the opinion of others and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the College. Employees should also notify the Public Relations and Marketing Department when information has been provided to the media.

In releasing any information, the Public Relations Department will seek to define the following factors:

- The news value and/or propriety of the information
- The target group or audience to be reached and influenced
- The intended effect of the message
- The proper structure of the intended message
- The media which will most effectively communicate each message to the target group, with consideration to the timing and frequency of the message.

<u>Crisis Communication Procedure</u>
Purpose: To initiate communication with appropriate parties to provide accurate, complete and timely information to the public and the media in the event of a crisis. Communications will seek to restore and maintain a positive image of Barton among its publics. Communications with the media or other publics should be open, honest and frequent. Under almost no circumstance should “no comment” responses be provided. Refer all media inquiries to the Public Relations Department. For definitions and college procedures, the Crisis Communication Team will rely on the Emergency Operations Plan. In addition to the EOP’s definition of an Emergency, a crisis can include any event that the President and Director of Public Relations might consider to be significantly harmful to the college’s reputation.

Objective: To be perceived in the news media as a community-focused organization that genuinely cares about its employees, students and stakeholders. Barton Community College values and protects students, faculty and staff above all else, and will exhaust all measures to ensure their well-being.

Procedure: In the event of a crisis, *all* inquiries shall be referred to the Director of Public Relations (or designee). The President of the College shall be kept informed of all statements being delivered to the media.

What can be said: Preliminary contact with the media may be appropriate to inform reporters that information is on the way. As soon as initial facts are verified, the Director of Public Relations (or designee) will state the type of incident, when it occurred, why it happened, who is involved, and the location. Additional facts may be released as soon as they are known and verified.

Crisis Communications Checklist:

1. Director of Public Relations is notified of crisis situation.
2. Director of Public Relations will initiate the Crisis Communication Plan.
3. Director of Public Relations determines level of crisis and assembles team.
4. Emergency Operations Plan is reviewed.
5. Appropriate communications to relevant news organizations and other stakeholders are planned.
6. Crisis Communication Team monitors media and responds to phone calls, emails and online comments.
7. Follow-up information is to be provided as it becomes available.

(Based on policy 1106; revised and approved by President on 1/26/15)