2105 – College Communications

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. 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.

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 and properly manage accurate and complete public information to maintain a positive standing with the public and media in the event of a crisis involving the College or anyone connected with the College.

Procedure: In the event of a crisis, *all* inquiries shall be referred to the Director of Public Relations (or designee). However, *all* statements made by the Director of Public Relations (or designee) must be cleared with the President of the College before they are released.

What can be said: 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.

Media Relations: Maintaining credibility is the most important aspect in crisis management. Therefore, *all* information released to the media must be presented in an open and candid manner.

Crisis Communications Checklist:

1. Establish contact with appropriate key people so they can be informed of the

situation or so statements may be cleared before they are released.

2. Assemble a chronology or fact sheet to have as a handout and a historical document.
3. Write all statements to be issued during a crisis. Do not ad lib or speak without referring to written statements.
4. Release the information only when the facts are absolutely accurate and the College's legal position is clear. Do not speculate.
5. Keep a list of names and telephone numbers of news media personnel.
6. If time permits and it is agreeable with those involved, a news conference may be arranged so media questions can be thoroughly answered.
7. As soon as possible, let employees and other internal publics know what is happening.

(Based on policy 1106; revised and approved by President on 3/31/09)