

LUTHER COLLEGE

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Department:	Communication
Subject:	Media Relations and Press Release Policy
Date Issued:	October 2022
Updated and Reviewed By:	Bill Smith, Vice President for Communication, April 2024
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Council, April 2024

I. Policy/Procedure

The function of serving as an official spokesperson for Luther College resides in the Office of the President and the Division of Communication. Those offices will determine how official college news is released to the media and by whom.

In the event other officers or employees of the college are asked by the media for comments or information on matters relating to the college, they are to alert the media relations specialist who will determine the next step forward. If officers or employees are approached by the media for comments or information not pertaining to college business, it is strongly encouraged to make the media relations specialist aware.

The media relations specialist in the Division of Communication shall be the college contact for official news and information dissemination to the media through all channels of communication (news releases, media alerts, public services announcements, in-coming and out-going media calls, social media posts).

The athletics communications director in the Division of Communication shall be the college contact for all athletics-related official news and information dissemination to the media through all channels of communication (news releases, media alerts, public services announcements, in-coming and out-going media calls, social media posts).

Any documented occurrences in which this policy is not followed will be referred directly to division leadership of that area.

II. Purpose

This policy ensures that Luther College maintains consistency, accuracy, and veracity in all media interactions.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Luther College.

IV. Terms and Definitions

- “Press release” or “news release” is defined as “an official statement issued to newspapers and other media outlets giving information on a particular matter.”
- “Spokesperson” is defined as “a person making statements, written or oral, to external entities on behalf of a group or individual.” The default spokesperson for the college is the Vice President for Communication, the media relations specialist, or their designee.
- “Media” is defined as “an entity engaged in mass communication to the public through broadcasting, publishing and/or the internet.”

V. Procedures and Guidelines

- A. The Office of the President and/or the Division of Communication conveys the official college position on issues of general college-wide impact.
 - Other officers or employees of the college may act as an official spokesperson, only when designated by one of these two offices.
- B. All college-related inquiries from the media are to be referred to the media relations specialist prior to providing comment. The media relations specialist will determine next steps so that inquiries can be handled to ensure a clear, timely, coordinated, and consistent college response.
- C. All non-institutional-related inquiries from the media should be referred to the media relations specialist for awareness building.
- D. In cases of institutional significance to the college, the media relations specialist will work with other college officials to issue statements or positions to detail facts of the issue and summarize the college’s position.
- E. In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, the Vice President of Communication will handle all contacts with the media, and serve as the college’s Public Information Officer. The PIO will coordinate information flow from the college to the public. In such situations, all college departments should refer calls from the media to the media relations specialist.
- F. Monitoring exposure is an essential element of the college’s communication plan, in all formats and modes from traditional to social media. For that reason, all ideas for articles, awards, student profiles or feature stories that ~~positively portray~~ convey the mission of the institution and its work in the community should be directed to the media relations specialist. Conversely, the media relations specialist should be notified of any potential crisis that ~~if negative occurrences~~ could rise to the level of a news story.
 - No officer or employee of the college outside of the Division of Communication should send news releases, media alerts, public service announcements, or other outreach to the media without direct approval from the Division of Communication.

VI. Confidentiality and Record

All records of press releases, media outreach, and media inquiry will be maintained by the Office of Marketing and Communication. Record of violations to this policy will be maintained by the relevant division cabinet member as well as the Office of Human Resources.