

HOWARD UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number: 400-008
Policy Title: DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSON FOR OFFICIAL
UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS
Responsible Officer: University President
Responsible Office: Office of the President, Office of University Communications
Effective Date: March 5, 2012

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Howard University (“the University”) that the President and/or as appropriate the Chairman of the Board of Trustees are the only authorized spokespersons for the University. In specific instances or as the need arises, the President may designate the Executive Director of University Communications or another representative as the University Spokesperson. In addition to the University Spokesperson, the President may designate an alternate spokesperson.

This policy is effective immediately and supersedes all existing policies.

II. RATIONALE

Howard University has a fundamental responsibility to inform the public about its mission, initiatives and accomplishments, and is committed to accuracy and openness as it disseminates information about its programs and activities to the public through the news media and/or other communication entities.

The purpose of this policy is: to preserve and advance the mission of the University; to help maintain the reputation and highest level of credibility the University has in its association with the media; and to assure accuracy, consistency and coordination in communications with the media from all departments and schools. This policy is not intended in any way to abridge academic freedom or freedom of expression.

III. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy is University-wide and applies to all faculty members, staff, and other employees of the University and Howard University Hospital, leaders of University-sponsored organizations and associations, and other entities including volunteers, alumni, members of Boards of Visitors, corporate and educational partners, donors, representatives of granting agencies, vendors and consultants hired by the University or its units.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Office of University Communications (OUC)** – a resource to the University community for managing media relations. The OUC maintains a web presence at www.howard.edu/newsroom and can be contacted by email ouc@howard.edu or phone: (202) 238-2330.
- B. **University Spokesperson and Alternate Spokesperson** - Individuals designated by the President to convey information, including crisis communication responses, about the University to the media and respond to other media inquiries.
- C. **University Communications** - Any information about or related to the University, students, faculty, staff, alumni, colleges, schools, programs, history, etc. The Office of University Communications is the primary contact for University information and faculty experts in specific fields.
- D. **The Media** - All representatives of print, Internet, and broadcast entities and affiliates, including but not limited to newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online publications, television and radio. For the purposes of this policy this term is used interchangeably with “Reporter.”
- E. **Reporter** – a journalist, blogger, social media representative. For the purposes of this policy this term is used interchangeably with “The Media.”

V. POLICY PROCEDURES

This policy is not intended to affect the responsibilities of faculty members regarding their scholarly activities and personal involvement in community activities, nor is it intended to affect an individual’s right to express personal views about University or non-University issues. When anyone affiliated with the University chooses to make statements, it is the responsibility of that person to clearly state from the onset that it is his or her personal view or opinion and **does not in any way represent the official position of the University, either directly or indirectly.**

The President has delegated responsibility for the dissemination of official University communications to the Executive Director of University Communications. The day-to-day responsibility for managing the University’s official interactions with representatives of the media is delegated to the Office of University Communications, which is primarily responsible for writing and producing external and internal communications for the media about activities and programs University-wide.

Any University employee/office/organization receiving an inquiry from the media or request for official University information should direct the reporter to the Office of University Communications. Immediately following contact, the University employee/office/organization should also contact the Office of University Communications, which will assist in coordinating the University’s official response with

appropriate stakeholders in the University community. Individual offices should not field any media calls independently.

VI. SANCTIONS

For faculty and staff, violations of this policy, as determined by the Office of University Communications, may result in disciplinary actions as allowed by Human Resources policies and procedures, including negative evaluation in annual performance appraisals or termination. For recognized organizations, violations of this policy may result in penalties including loss of privileges.

Violations of this policy by volunteers, vendors, and others will be handled at the discretion of the administration. Sanctions may include, among other things, withdrawal of privileges and association with Howard University.

VII. HYPERLINK

www.howard.edu/policy

Other relevant University Policies:

400-002 Inviting Dignitaries to Howard University

700-001 Social Media

Other Resources:

Media Guidelines:

<http://www.howard.edu/newsroom/mediaresources/MediaGuidelines-HowardUniversity.htm>