Cheyney University Policy IA - 2010-2009

Policy on Media Relations

Approved by: University Relations Council / President’s Cabinet

History: Issued - 2-17-2009

Related Policies: n/a

Additional References: n/a

Purpose

Cheyney University’s general policy addressing relations with the mass media (newspapers, magazines, television, radio) is one in which university officials deal openly, honestly, quickly, and accurately with media personnel to provide the media with all information about the university. The university also adheres to provisions in the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Sunshine Act of 1986 in the conduct of university business in meetings and hearings.

The Director of Public Relations and Marketing, or his/her designee, is the official spokesperson for the university on general university issues. If another official speaks to the media on a general university issue or on behalf of the university, the comment is cleared through the Director of Public Relations and Marketing. Faculty members can be asked to be interviewed by press, coordinated through the Office of Public Relations and Marketing. As a University Faculty member, the option to be considered a PASSHE expert in a field of study would require you to speak with the press on that said subject matter when called upon. This voluntary list of experts is shared system-wide. At no time, should faculty members comment as a “Univeristy official” or spokesperson. To be added to the list of University experts, please contact the office of Public Relations and Marketing for guidelines and tips on dealing with the press. Faculty can however, express their opinions as private citizens.

The principles as incorporated within this general policy are:

1. All news releases from Cheyney University are issued from the Office of Public Relations and Marketing. Departments or university program offices forward to the Office of Public Relations and Marketing all drafts of news releases or information they wish issued and the Office of Public Relations and Marketing prepares a final draft, sends the release to appropriate media, and forwards a copy of the release to the originating office.

2. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing maintains a close working relationship with mass media in the geographic areas the university reaches.

3. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing Director, or his or her designee, works in close conjunction with the President’s Cabinet and attends meetings of other administrative and management bodies on campus to have access to top-level information and thinking.
4. The President’s Cabinet identifies an ongoing basis issues that could become critical or cause either positive or negative visibility in the media.

5. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing develops, with appropriate personnel involved, formal positions on issues or situations of interest to media and produces statements for the Office of Public Relations and Marketing Director and the officials involved to use in conversations with media.

6. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing maintains a crisis communication plan for dealing with media in natural disasters or any situation or event that negatively affects the image of the university.

7. Unless notified within 10 days of the first of a semester, the university may, if appropriate, release the following information, commonly referred to as directory information, to the media about individual students: name address telephone number date and place of birth major field of study participation in officially recognized activities and sports weight and height of members of athletic teams dates of attendance at Cheyney University degrees and awards received the most previous educational institution attended by the student. FERPA waiver is referred to as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act which governs disclosure of student educations records and grants five specific rights of current and former students:
   1) the right to inspect their own education records;
   2) the right to prevent disclosure of their own education records;
   3) the right to seek amendment to their own records if they are inaccurate or misleading, and in certain cases append a statement to their records;
   4) the right to be notified of their privacy rights under FERPA; and
   5) the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education in Washington concerning an alleged failure by the University to comply with FERPA.

8. This same type of information may be released about alumni when it is available from the Alumni Affairs Office.

9. Information about faculty and staff that is kept on file in the Office of Public Relations and Marketing may be released to the media when appropriate.

10. Information about criminal incidents that occur on campus, including information about students or university employees involved if it is appropriate, will be released to the media by the Office of Public Relations and Marketing after the Office of Public Relations and Marketing has obtained accurate information from Cheyney University Office of Public Safety.