

## **Huron Media Relations Policy**

Communication is the key to the success of any public or private institution. An effective communication strategy, both internally and externally, is an important part of Huron's overall marketing strategy; however, in order to establish a collective strategy, there must be consistency in Huron's communication policy with the Principal and the Director of Communications determining the most appropriate dissemination of news.

*Effective media relations best serve the university by:*

- Informing the public of Huron's programs and services we provide to the community
- Promoting Huron's achievements, activities and events of significance
- Increasing visibility of Huron within the London Community and beyond
- Providing the community with accurate information regarding incidents of a controversial and/or sensitive nature

*External Communication* – to be pro-active in disseminating newsworthy events taking place at Huron University College to the general public through the use of various media i.e. Newspapers, T.V., radio

*Internal Communication* – to ensure that all relevant news/information is communicated to Huron University College staff.

### **What is a newsworthy event?**

Newsworthy events can be categorized into two, distinct sections: Promotional Events and Newsworthy Events.

*Promotional Events* intend to obtain publicity and exposure for Huron as well as build a favourable image. These can include such events as a new course or program or a change in policy.

*Newsworthy Events* are of interest to people outside of the Huron College Community. These can include events such as the visit of an important dignitary or public official, a large donation or an official opening.

### **Media Policy**

- The Principal of Huron University College serves as the official spokesperson and conveys the official university position.
- Depending on the circumstance or specific topic, the Principal may designate another university administrator to serve as the spokesperson on a particular issue.
- The Director of Communications must be notified of all potentially controversial media inquiries with respect to Huron University College activities. The Director will notify the Principal and arrange for an interview or statement, if required.

- Media representatives are asked to place their interview or information requests through the Director of Communications or the Principal.
- In order to facilitate media relations, the media are encouraged to inform the Director of Communications at Huron, in advance, or upon arrival on campus, unless they have been specifically invited to the campus.

## **Procedures**

In response to inquiries by the Media

- 1) Administrators, deans, directors, faculty and staff should not respond to inquiries from the media concerning personnel issues, crisis management, emergency situations and University policies; instead, they should immediately refer these inquiries to the Principal of Huron.
- 2) Administrators, deans, directors, faculty and staff may comment on a topic that is within the employee's area of expertise (i.e. about a faculty member's research or area of academic specialization); however, all media inquiries should be reported immediately to the Director of Communications.
- 3) Administrators, deans, directors, faculty and staff who respond to media inquiries are requested to notify the Director of Communications of their contact with the media, stating the name of media outlet and the date and time that the story is scheduled to run. This can be done by phone or by an email message.

## **Who should I give my news to?**

Each administrative department should advise the Communications Office of all upcoming newsworthy events in written format. Outline when, where, what time and who's involved in your event memo.

Examples of events:

- all special events within your department
- any policy changes
- honours bestowed upon Huron University College
- guest speakers

News related to Human Resources, such as hiring, termination, or retirement should be directed to the CAO for his monthly newsletter.

## **Responsibilities for External Communication**

- 1) All departments should be on the lookout for newsworthy events.
- 2) The Communications office should be advised of news items in written format – email is acceptable.
- 3) In consultation with the Principal, the Director of Communications will write press releases and determine which media are most appropriate to be notified.

- 4) Press release or memo of advertisement will first be distributed internally.
- 5) Press release distributed to media by email and/or fax.
- 6) If necessary, telephone follow-up to media.

### **Responsibilities for Internal Communication**

- 1) Any items needed to be communicated internally should be given to the Communications office.
- 2) In consultation with the Principal, the Director of Communications will distribute the information through an email notice.

### **Responding to the Media**

Communicating with the media in a timely and direct fashion is of the utmost importance when maintaining a positive rapport between Huron and the media. When a member of the media contacts you,

- Obtain all of their contact information including: name, phone number/email, the name of the media organization and the anticipated time of release of information.
- Respond honestly and quickly. All contacts from the media should be returned within a half-day in order to assist media persons with their deadlines. If you are not available, assign an alternate employee to handle any media enquiries.
- Clarify any question before responding. If you do not know the answer to a question, or feel uncomfortable responding, take the reporter's name and contact information and advise him/her that someone with that information will contact him/her as soon as possible.
- Provide your phone number and email address for any follow-up questions.

Issues that should NOT be discussed with reporters, unless you have been directed by the Director of Communications and/or the Principal, to do so:

- 1) Legal issues,
- 2) Personnel Issues,
- 3) Questions that involve university integrity, such as ethics or issues that may result in harm to others,
- 4) A campus crisis or emergency.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)**

As of June 10, 2006, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) includes all universities in Ontario. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that Ontario's publicly funded post-secondary institutions are accountable to the people of Ontario.

The two key principles of the Act are public access to information and the protection of personal privacy. FIPPA provides a general right of access to university records through a formal request procedure, subject to certain limited and specific exemptions. It also requires universities to protect the privacy of university-held personal information, and includes rules for collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of personal information.

Personal information on employees or students (current and former) cannot be automatically released. Requests must go through a formal process requested by FIPPA and Huron.

Another requirement of FIPPA is to obtain photo release forms for all individuals involved in any visual representation of the university. Photo release forms are available in the Communications Office.

For more information on FIPPA, visit  
<http://www.uwo.ca/pvp/westernmatters/0605/FIPPA.htm>

### **Campus Emergency/Crisis**

- In the event of a crisis, the Principal shall be notified immediately.
- The Principal of Huron will be the designated spokesperson for Huron in the event of a crisis. Only the Principal (or a person directly designated by the Principal) may comment to the media, to next-of-kin, or to others affected by the crisis.
- The Principal will convene the Emergency Planning and Response Team to ensure that all appropriate and necessary steps are being taken to deal with the crisis.
- For more information, please consult Huron's "Crisis Communications Procedure."

### **Distribution of Advances**

When a speaker is involved, the text from his/her speech can be made available to the media in advance of delivery to the public. Giving the media advance material allows them to provide better coverage of the news event. All advances should be given to the Communications Office for distribution.

### **Media Contacts**

Ramona Lumpkin, PhD  
Principal

T. 519-438-7224 ext. 299  
[rlumpkin@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:rlumpkin@huron.uwo.ca)

Kim Knowles  
Director of Communications  
T. 519-438-7224 ext. 322  
[kknowles@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:kknowles@huron.uwo.ca)