**Responding to Media Inquiries UPPS No. 06.05.02**

**Issue No. 9**

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**Sr. Reviewer: Assistant Vice President for University Advancement Communications**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to maintaining a working relationship with media outlets and outside persons that present the university in a manner accurate and consistent with the university’s mission.*

**01. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

01.01 This policy provides guidelines to Texas State University personnel who receive inquiries from media and persons who wish to film on campus. For the purposes of this policy, references to the “campus” include all Texas State properties, regardless of proximity to the main San Marcos campus (e.g., Round Rock, STAR Park, etc.).

01.02 Additional information and guidance for complying with requests for public information may be found in [UPPS No. 01.04.30](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/UPPS/UPPS-01-04-30.HTML), Release of Information Pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.

**02. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEWS MEDIA LIAISONS**

02.01 The director of the Office of Media Relations (OMR), assistant vice president (AVP) for University Advancement Communications, and the public information officer in the University Police Department are the university’s official news media liaisons. The chief Sports Information officer is the official news media liaison regarding athletics but keeps the OMR informed of issues with major media impact. The chief information security officer should be consulted when inquiries involve information security matters or incidents (see [UPPS No. 04.01.01](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-01.html), Security of Texas State Information Resources, Section 02.02 i., for more information). The Texas State University System (TSUS) Office of General Counsel should be consulted when inquiries involve legal matters or matters in litigation. In such instances, The TSUS Office of General Counsel may serve as the university’s spokesperson. All Texas Public Information Act requests should be directed to The TSUS Office of General Counsel.

02.02 It is in the best interest of the university that news media representatives have confidence in the director of the OMR and OMR staff. It is important that OMR staff, with the full cooperation of all segments of the university, always practice policies and procedures that will gain the respect and confidence of the press.

02.03 If a potentially newsworthy event occurs, the director of the OMR will provide the facts to the appropriate media as quickly as possible.

02.04 In the event of a potentially newsworthy event, the director of the OMR should assemble all pertinent facts, outline strategy for notifying media, and receive administrative approval for the notification of news media. The university may designate one or more spokespersons for the event.

02.05 Because of the need to maintain credibility with both the press and public, the director of the OMR is authorized to release information pertaining to emergencies, crime, controversies, and other events to which the press has a reasonable interest. This will be done after carefully assembling facts, notifying pertinent persons, and clearing the information with the appropriate vice president.

**03. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY**

03.01 University administrators should keep the director or assistant director of the OMR fully informed, factually and promptly, about activities in their areas of responsibilities that may come to the attention of the media.

03.02 Employees with tips on possible news stories are encouraged to contact the OMR with the information. [OMR staff](https://news.txstate.edu/about/contact.html) will evaluate the tip for its news value and handle media notification as warranted.

**04. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO MEDIA INQUIRIES**

04.01 When university personnel are contacted by media representatives requesting information or making inquiries into matters pertaining to the university, they should follow these procedures:

a. Get the journalist’s name and contact information, including the name of the media outlet they represent.

b. Notify their supervisor or the director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications. As long as time factors are taken into consideration, it is permissible to take a phone number, ask what topic will be covered, and immediately return a call or email. This allows the person queried the opportunity to seek advice.

c. Refer media inquiries directly to the director of the OMR or the appropriate vice president when:

1) the OMR has already received information concerning the subject for which information is being sought;

2) the inquiry deals with an area that lies within or is shared with another administrative area;

3) the inquiry deals with a university-wide matter or policy;

4) the inquiry deals with a controversial or sensitive matter;

5) the inquiry deals with a matter of proposed or alleged university policy;

6) the media are on campus and need an informed escort; or

7) the inquiry requests information that is confidential or legally protected from disclosure.

d. The director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications will work with the appropriate vice presidents, or designees, in preparing responses to media inquiries that fall in any of the areas outlined in Section 04.01 c.

e. If the person contacted is the information owner for the information being requested, they should give the reporter their full cooperation to the extent allowed under laws and policies listed in [UPPS No. 01.04.30](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/UPPS/UPPS-01-04-30.HTML), Release of Information Pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.

f. When answering questions, personnel should be fair and factual.

g. Normally, persons interviewed are expected to comment only on matters within their expertise. If a reporter asks for a comment on a subject about which the person being interviewed has no knowledge or about which they do not wish to comment, they should not hesitate to tell the reporter so. In such instances, the person should refer the reporter to the OMR.

h. Employees should use caution if a reporter agrees not to use their names in a story about a controversial issue.

i. When an employee of the university gives a personal opinion on the subject, they should make certain that the reporter understands that they are speaking for themselves, not for the university.

j. Persons interviewed should not assume they will see a reporter’s story before it is published or broadcast. The newsperson is under no obligation to show a copy. If scientific or technical data are involved, the person interviewed should suggest that the reporter check their story back for accuracy. Some reporters are willing to check the technical data back with the source to assure accuracy if time permits. As a safeguard, technical data should be provided in written form whenever possible.

k. Because the term “off the record” means different things to different reporters, it is unwise to request that reporters consider remarks as “off the record.”

l. In some instances, employees may wish to have a colleague, or the director of the OMR join them for the interview. Should the interview take place via telephone, computer, or other electronic devices reporters should be made aware that they are in a conference call setting.

04.02 After answering or receiving a press inquiry, notify the director of the OMR of the call and the responses as quickly as possible. University employees who receive calls on university policy matters beyond their scope of authority should refer them either to their supervisor or to the OMR.

04.03 Reporters who formally request interviews, the opportunity to attend classes, or visit clinics or special programs should be handled somewhat differently from those who make a one-time request for information. Subject to the agreement of the reporter involved, the following procedures are recommended:

a. inform the reporter that they will be provided assistance in developing a schedule and that a location for their interviews will be provided;

b. obtain the reporter’s arrival schedule;

c. whenever possible, the top administrator for the involved area (vice presidents for service divisions; college deans for Academic Affairs), the director or other OMR representative, and the program director (department chair) should meet with the reporter upon their arrival on campus;

d. an OMR representative, with the administrator’s assistance, will serve as a liaison to work with the reporter in locating classrooms, keeping on schedule and providing any additional assistance the reporter might need;

e. the OMR representative or the administrator should designate a location for the reporter to use to conduct their interviews, if they desire;

f. a wrap-up session should be scheduled, if possible, in the administrator’s office.

g. if a major state or national medium is involved, the OMR should decide if the reporter should be invited to meet the president of the university, or the president’s official designee. The director should work with the Office of the President to schedule a convenient time.

04.04 If a reporter contacts a staff member regarding a single story more than twice, the staff member should notify their supervisor and the director of the OMR.

04.05 Controversial matters that continue for an extended period require special considerations for handling news media inquiries. The director of the OMR should develop plans for handling such situations on an individual basis and should be notified after each separate media contact has been made.

**05. PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING PRESS CONFERENCES**

05.01 Press conferences are held for the convenience of the media and to provide a format for the effective distribution of important information to the media. In developing the format for a press conference, it is important that media be considered the primary audience.

05.02 The director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications will provide advice as to whether to schedule a news conference.

05.03 The director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications will advise regarding the following press conference factors:

a. the location of the press conference or method of delivery (online vs in-person;

b. the time and date of the press conference;

c. press conference invitation list;

d. format or agenda for the press conference; and

e. identification of which university officials should attend.

05.04 It is important to carefully consider the desirability of having a press conference. Some matters require face-to-face press conference settings, while others are handled more efficiently in a news release format or by individual media contact.

05.05 Whenever a press conference is scheduled, those involved should understand that the press conference is a question-and-answer situation. Great care should be exercised to have answers assembled for all questions that might be asked.

05.06 The OMR will distribute key points of the press conference in a written statement either before or after the conference.

05.07 Local news media invited to the press conference but who did not attend should be provided any written material presented at the press conference, as well as copies of all follow-up OMR-issued conference reports.

05.08 As a matter of procedure, all press conference notifications should be made at least 24 hours in advance.

**06. CAMPUS FILMING PROCEDURES**

06.01 The director of the OMR manages all requests for commercial non-news photography, film making, or videotaping at the university. All inquiries of this nature should be directed to the director of the OMR.

06.02 Once a decision has been made to permit film making, the OMR will work with the production company in coordinating its efforts with all appropriate university offices.

06.03 The university will consider permitting the making of photographs, films, and video on campus for commercial non-news purposes on the basis of the following guidelines:

a. A production will be considered in terms of its size and complexity and to what degree it might disrupt classes and other normal campus activities. When possible, production will take place on weekends or during vacation periods.

b. The university expects the production to offer educational or otherwise worthwhile experiences to students. The university encourages the use of students as extras and production assistants for on-campus productions. The university requires that a copy of the production be donated to the university.

c. Anyone wishing to film on campus for commercial non-news purposes must submit in writing, detailed information about the proposed project including locations, days and hours of shooting, number of people involved in each day’s shooting, types of activity to be filmed, list of equipment and vehicles used in connection with the filming, sizes and composition of structures involved, and security and safety requirements.

d. The information in Section 06.03 c. and a script must be submitted to the director of the OMR at least 30 days before filming. This requirement can be waived at the discretion of the director in the case of small productions.

e. The university reserves the right to review the script as a condition of project approval and to deny use of its facilities in cases where it considers the content of the film or project to be inconsistent with the university’s mission or image.

f. After locations are given tentative approval, the production company must take part in an initial meeting with representatives of all involved university departments. The production company must coordinate with university officials all logistical requirements and requests, including parking, equipment, transportation, etc. University representatives who should be considered for attendance at the initial meeting with the production company include the vice president for University Advancement, the director of the OMR, the director of the University Police Department, or designee, the supervisor of Parking Services, the associate vice president for Facilities, or designee, the associate general counsel, the director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management, and the managers of any buildings used in production.

g. A commercial general liability insurance certificate with limits sufficient to cover the university’s liability exposure, naming The TSUS Board of Regents, Texas State, and its employees and agents as additional insurers, must be filed with the associate general counsel at least 10 days before the first set-up day. In addition, if the company wishing to film at the university has three or more employees, it must furnish proof of worker’s compensation insurance.

h. The university reserves the right to require production companies to make a damage deposit prior to the arrival of any production vehicles on campus. The damage deposit will be refunded in full when the shooting locations are inspected by university officials and found to be in satisfactory condition. Special arrangements can be made for small productions. The manager or supervisor of the building or location on campus will determine if a deposit is required.

i. Each production company will be charged a location fee. The standard fee is $5,000 per shooting day. Fees for set-up days are $2,000 per day. Location fees may be adjusted on a case-by-case basis.

j. The production company will compensate the university for actual hourly costs of university employees when utilized exclusive of their normal duties, such as security and maintenance personnel.

k. A shoot will be considered confirmed when a contract has been signed. The contract must contain a hold-harmless clause approved by The TSUS Associate General Counsel. The production company must provide the university with an insurance certificate, damage deposit (if required), a check for the full amount of the location fee, and a signed contract at least 24 hours before set-up begins. At that point, the conditions in the contract become operative.

l. The production company will adhere to all state laws and rules and regulations of the university and [The TSUS Rules and Regulations](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html) while filming on the campus.

**07. UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE COUNSELING PROCEDURES**

07.01 The director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications may be contacted directly by a university administrator or employee for advice and counsel regarding media relations or public relations matters.

07.02 The director of the OMR or the AVP for University Advancement Communications are responsible for advising university administrators of matters with potential media relations or public relations impact.

**08. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

08.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Assistant Vice President for University February 1 E4Y

Advancement Communications

**09. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Assistant Vice President for University Advancement Communications; senior reviewer of this UPPS

Vice President for University Advancement

President