



MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

Policy Area:	Board		
Policy Number:	MDRPL_2405N_BG/VCR		
Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, Enrolment & College Relations		
Policy Contact:	Vice President, Enrolment & College Relations		
Stakeholders:	Employees		
Authority:	<i>College and Institute Act</i>		
Approval Authority:	Board of Governors		
Approval Date:	May 21, 2024		
Effective Date:	October 1, 2024		
Replaces or New:	New		
Last reviewed:	March 2024	Scheduled review date:	March 2029

Procedures: *None*

1. Policy Statement

Okanagan College is committed to open, timely and respectful relationships with the media. These relationships are built on truthful and accurate communications, reflect our values and exist with respect of the legitimate requirements of student and employee privacy and safety, and in adherence to relevant legislation. This includes supporting working relationships that are free of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and support a collegial environment characterized by mutual respect, safety, civility and free inquiry.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide decision-making with respect to how Okanagan College plans for, interacts with, and responds to the media in ways that respectfully consider the Okanagan College community.

3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all forms of communication between all members of the College community and all media representatives to ensure that the College is identifying the appropriate Spokespersons to respond to communication requests.

4. Definitions

College Community	Means Students, Employees, members of the Board of Governors of the College, contractors, volunteers and visitors.
College Operations	Means activities related to College values, strategies, programming, finances, activities, employee recruitment, student recruitment, events, and institutional or portfolio operations.
Communications	Means the dissemination of official information related to the College, including but not limited to College activities, plans, positions or events, through any medium, to members of the College Community, media representatives or the public.
Spokesperson	Means the person with the authority to speak to media representatives on behalf of the College and/or the College Community.
Media Representatives	Means persons who aim to publicize information for the general public and/or in employ of media organizations.

5. Principles for Media Relations

Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Board Chair shall be the primary official spokesperson for the College on matters pertaining specifically to Board Governance (e.g. the appointment of a new President).
- 5.2 In all other matters, the President shall be the primary official spokesperson. The Board Chair, President or Vice President, Enrolment and College Relations or their designate can appoint additional spokespeople as required.
- 5.3 All official communication and interactions with news media on behalf of the College, including independent or freelance reporters, will be coordinated and supported by College Relations.
- 5.4 All requests by the media to conduct interviews, and/or to record or livestream (audio, photography, digital video, etc.) College activities on campus, or College-led activities involving students or employees off-campus, shall be referred to and supported by College Relations.
- 5.5 College Relations leads all official digital and social media communications on behalf of the College, including providing oversight to all digital and social media channels initiated by members of the Okanagan College community and which represent the College brand.
- 5.6 In the event of an emergency, College Relations will work with the appropriate administrators to provide the most accurate, relevant and timely information to members of the College Community, other stakeholders and the public at large.
- 5.7 To prevent misinformation, members of the College Community are advised to avoid sharing or spreading publicly any information that does not come through official channels.

Respect for Discourse

- 5.8 Okanagan College is a community of diverse viewpoints, including students, employees, faculty and instructors, Board members, alumni, donors, industry/sector partners and volunteers. It is essential the College maintains a neutral institutional position publicly on politics and/or social issues to honour this diversity and foster a welcoming, inclusive culture. As such, the College

does not endorse political parties or take political or social stances, beyond those consistent with the College’s mandate, policies, and strategic plan.

- 5.9 While only individuals designated to speak publicly as an official spokesperson for the College may do so, the College recognizes the rights and responsibilities that flow from the exercise of academic freedom.
- 5.10 Employees contacted by news media are free to grant media interviews based on their personal findings, research or opinions in their field, but they are not authorized to speak to media as an official spokesperson for the College. Employees should notify College Relations in advance of any interview for awareness. When requested, the College will provide support and/or facilitate media requests and/or media training. An Employee may be subject to discipline under the *Code of Ethical Practices Policy* should they speak to media as a College spokesperson if not authorized.
- 5.11 Employees contacted by media representatives to provide an interview about College operations, programming, or any other College matter should contact College Relations who will lead the response, including deciding whether to grant the interview or follow up in a different way. Employees should refer all media inquiries requesting a College response to collegerelations@okanagacollege.ca.
- 5.12 Content that is unlawful or contrary to College policies may not be communicated through College communications channels, and if found, should be retracted or removed (where possible). College Relations should be notified and may support the removal of these communications as required.

6. Related Acts and Regulations

None.

7. Supporting References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

Code of Ethical Practices Policy

Social Media Policy

History / Revisions

Date	Action
------	--------

2024-05-21	Approved by Board of Governors:
------------	---------------------------------

Media Relations Policy