

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

OFFICIAL POLICY

3.7.1

**Media Relations:
Press Releases, Public Statements, Communicating
with the Media, Opinion Essays and Letters to the
Editor**

11/25/2024

Policy Statement

Whenever we communicate with external audiences as members of the College of Charleston community, our materials and our words may positively or negatively impact public perception of the College. This is an effect of both the specific information we provide as well as the clarity, tone, style and professionalism with which the information is presented. If the College of Charleston is to be recognized as a national university, our official communications with external audiences must be coordinated and clear.

This policy is intended to provide guidance to members of the campus community when communicating with the media and the public. The College asks for the courtesy of timely notice and respect for decisions made by the President and the Board of Trustees designating those who are authorized to officially speak for the College. To these ends, the Office of Marketing and Communications is responsible for developing communication strategies, highlighting and disseminating university news, facilitating media requests for expert commentary and providing information to the media and the public about College of Charleston people, programs, events and activities.

The College of Charleston strongly supports the free speech rights of its students, faculty and staff when speaking as individual citizens and not purporting to speak on behalf of the College. Furthermore, the College embraces academic freedom and supports the right of faculty to express disagreement with one another and/or the university administration. In support of academic freedom and consistent with policies of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), faculty members will not be subjected to institutional censorship or discipline when speaking or writing as citizens. When speaking on public matters, the AAUP advises: "... faculty should strive to be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show appropriate respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution."

Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Office of Marketing and Communications

Policy

Only the President or designated spokespersons are authorized to speak on or issue public statements on behalf of the College of Charleston.

Speech on behalf of the College or a unit of the College

All press releases, public statements, opinion essays and letters to the editor issued by the College of Charleston – with the exception of sports information, which is supervised by the Athletics Director – are to be issued by the Office of Marketing and Communications. College offices, departments, programs and schools wishing to issue their own press releases should coordinate with the Office of Marketing and Communications prior to releasing any information to external audiences.

Speech by College Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff who write opinion essays and letters to the editor may include their College of Charleston title and/or affiliation if the writer's academic and/or professional credentials, or their position at the College, is relevant to the subject of the communication. In no event, however, should the writer purport to speak on behalf of the College when expressing a personal or professional point of view on any issue.

If the writer is expressing a personal point of view on an issue not related to the College or the writer's professional position, it is preferred that they not include their College title and/or affiliation. If there will be confusion about whether the writer is speaking on behalf of the College, the writer should indicate that they are speaking in their capacity as a private citizen and not on behalf of the College of Charleston.

Departments/Offices Affected by the Policy

All departments/offices.

Procedures Related to the Policy

Press Releases

All press releases from the College of Charleston – except for sports information, which is supervised by the Athletics Director – are to be issued by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Campus offices that wish to issue their own press releases must coordinate with the Office of Marketing and Communications prior to releasing any information.

When requesting a press release or submitting a draft press release for review, please include as much information as possible: date, time, place, program content and background information for any speakers. Inform the Office of Marketing and Communications about the type of audience you are trying to attract. If you are targeting a particular media outlet for your story/event, please provide the name of the publication(s) and contact information.

To request a press release or to submit a draft press release for review, please submit a [service request on the Office of Marketing and Communications Hub site](#). Please indicate whether the request is urgent.

All press releases should end with the following standard College of Charleston identifier:

“Located in the heart of historic Charleston, South Carolina, the College of Charleston is a nationally recognized, public liberal arts and sciences university. Founded in 1770, the College is among the nation’s top universities for quality education, student life and affordability. Its beautiful and historic campus, combined with contemporary facilities, cutting-edge programs and accessible faculty, attracts students from across the U.S. and around the world.”

Public Statements

Only the President or designated spokespersons are authorized to speak on or issue public statements on behalf of the College of Charleston.

College units (schools, departments, programs, etc.) that wish to issue their own public statements that are distinct from public statements issued by the College must seek guidance in advance from the Office of Marketing and Communications by submitting the information in a Word document to news@charleston.edu. The College’s media relations team understands the importance of timely responses to media inquiries. Please indicate whether your request is urgent. You may also call our offices at 843.953.5667.

At a minimum, public statements that diverge from the College’s official position on a particular topic should indicate that the statement is the opinion of the signatories and does not represent the official position of the College.

Communicating with the Media

The Office of Marketing and Communications is responsible for communicating with members of the news media. This office maintains extensive news media contacts

locally, regionally, and nationally and will work with faculty and staff to coordinate publicity for achievements, publications, events, programs, and other newsworthy items.

Faculty and staff contacted by news media to provide expert commentary or analysis on topics related to their academic expertise are encouraged to capitalize on these opportunities, as they help to highlight our faculty and staff as subject matter experts. Marketing and Communications can offer guidance and support to faculty and staff in advance of media interviews.

Media requests for a university comment must be directed to the Office of Marketing and Communications. If it is unclear whether the requestor is seeking a comment from the faculty member or from the university, the Office of Marketing and Communications should be consulted. This approach ensures that the College communicates the position of the university clearly and consistently. To contact Marketing and Communications regarding news media inquiries, send an email to news@charleston.edu or, if the matter is urgent, call the office at 843.953.5667.

Opinion Essays and Letters to the Editor

Faculty and staff are encouraged to submit op-eds and letters to the editor for publication in print and online media pertaining to their area of expertise. These submissions can provide valuable insight and commentary on newsworthy topics, showcase the expertise of the faculty or staff member and help to grow and reinforce the academic reputation of the College.

Faculty and staff who write opinion essays or letters to the editor that contain the writer's College affiliation and/or title should submit a copy of such documents to the Office of Marketing and Communications as a professional courtesy. This review is not intended to subject letters and essays to administrative approval. Rather, advance notice enables communications staff to be aware that publications related to the College may be forthcoming. If appropriate, Marketing and Communications can help to promote published material through its own news and social media channels.

If the writer is expressing a personal point of view on an issue not related to the College or the writer's professional position, there is no need to inform the Office of Marketing and Communications. But in these instances, it is preferred that the writer not include their College title and/or affiliation.

A College of Charleston title and/or affiliation may be included only if the writer's academic and/or professional credentials, or their position at the College, is relevant to the subject of the communication. In no event, however, should the writer purport to speak on behalf of the College when expressing a personal or professional point of view on any issue.

When and if the writer uses their College of Charleston affiliation, the following disclaimer is required for clarification: "I am speaking in my capacity as a private citizen and not on behalf of the College of Charleston."

To request assistance with submitting op-eds or letters to the editor, please submit the information in a Word document and send it to news@charleston.edu. Please indicate whether the request is urgent. You may also call the Office of Marketing and Communications at 843.953.5667.

Related Policies, Documents or Forms

College of Charleston [Social Media Policies and Guidelines 3.2.2](#); South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 8 Public Officers and Employees, Chapter 13 Ethics, Government Accountability and Campaign Reform (Section 8-13-1346); Electronic Communications Use Policy 10.14.

Issue Date: Date of Policy Revision: 11/25/24	Next Review Date: 11/25/29
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POLICY APPROVAL

(For use by the Office of the Board of Trustees or the Office of the President)

Policy Number: 3.7.1

President or
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Date: 11/25/24