



MEDIA RELATIONS

#5-02

Approved: December 16, 1992 by: Board of Governors
Effective: December 16, 1992
Date to be Reviewed: 2005

POLICY

North Island College recognizes the right of citizens to accurate, timely and consistent information regarding College policy, programming and services. The College also recognizes its obligation to provide such information to the public we serve through the media. In order to meet this obligation, the College will maintain an active media relations program which endorses the principle of two-way communication.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the exchange of information between the College and the media.

GUIDELINES

1. Official Spokespeople

The Chair of North Island College's Board of Governors, or his/her designate, is the official spokesperson for information about Board decisions.

The President, or his/her designate, is the official spokesperson for information of an educational or operational nature and in event of a crisis situation.

The Director of College Relations is the official spokesperson for information of a general nature and for the dissemination of information, as delegated, during times of crisis communication. In most cases the Director of College Relations will be the first point of contact for the media.

2. College to Media Communication

The College generates news through its programs, services, activities, events and personnel. The potential news items may be of interest locally, provincially or nationally. The College will seek out media coverage through its media relations program. This includes the development of information, in a useful form for media, such as news releases, public service announcements, news conferences and meetings with the media.

a. News Releases

News releases are short news stories or announcements which the College will write and distribute to publicize an event or activity.

- All College news releases will be issued through the Chair of the Board or the Office of the President or as delegated, through the Office of College Relations;
- All news releases will be written and/or edited by the Office of College Relations in consultation with the appropriate Department or individual;
- News releases will be generated for those activities deemed newsworthy in order that the College can maximize potential media coverage; and
- Departments and individuals requesting news releases must be prepared to provide background details and photographs (where appropriate).

b. Public Service Announcements (PSA)

College Public Service Announcements are usually ten (10) to thirty (30) seconds long (sixty [60] words at most) announcements dealing with routine activities that relate to the community. In most cases they promote College activities that are open or free of charge to the public.

- All College Public Service Announcements will be issued through, or in consultation with, the Office of College Relations; and
- As media deadlines require Public Service Announcements at least one (1) week in advance of the event to be publicized, the Office of College Relations will require Public Service Announcements information two (2) weeks in advance of the event to be publicized.

c. News Conferences

The College will call news conferences when it wishes to announce items of **major** significance and/or complexity (e.g. Campus closure/opening, major change in funding for College, crisis situation). A news conference is considered a formal invitation to the news media. At a news conference the media will expect to hear a major announcement, to have an opportunity to ask questions, record answers, take pictures and to receive a press kit containing information on the announcement.

- News conferences will only be called through the Chair of the Board or Office of the President, or as delegated, through the Office of College Relations; and

- The Office of College Relations will prepare the College for the news conference by: making all preliminary arrangements, briefing the spokesperson(s), checking the physical arrangements (room, acoustics, audio visual, etc.), providing press kits, orchestrating the conference and doing follow-up after the conference.

d. Meetings with Media

On an as-needed basis the College will arrange meetings with media outlets. The purpose of the meetings will be to develop rapport with specific news outlets and to determine the most effective approach in dealing with any particular issues.

- All meetings with the media, concerning College business, will be in consultation with the Office of College Relations; and
- College Departments or individuals who feel the media have misrepresented the College, in an article or broadcast, should consult with the Office of College Relations regarding the possibility of requesting a retraction or providing a rebuttal.

3. Media to College Communications

At various times media representatives may go directly to a Campus or College Centre or Department seeking information about College activities or personnel. In such instances the following procedures for response will apply.

a. Personal Contact

If asked, Board members may voice their opinion publicly, but in so doing, should make it clear that this opinion is not that of the Board. The Chair of North Island College's Board of Governors is the official spokesperson for information about Board decisions.

Senior Administrators contacted by the media to provide information and/or opinions on College related issues should work in consultation with the Office of College Relations. This is required in order that the College may provide a consistent message to the media and to avoid any liability and/or embarrassment that may result from innocent inaccuracies.

All other College employees are to consult with the Director of College Relations regarding the appropriate response to media inquiries.

b. Crisis Communications

In the event of a crisis situation on Campus, the Crisis Communication Plan will be initiated (see the policy on Crisis Communications Policy #5-01).

Definitions:

Media: Print (includes newspaper, magazines etc.), television (includes cable) and radio.

Media Relations: For the purpose of this policy media relations are defined as any contact that North Island College and its employees have with the media.

Media Relations Program: A planned program which promotes rapport with the news media and through the media with the public. It includes media releases, public service announcements, news conferences and personal contacts.

Cross Reference:

See also Crisis Communications Policy #5-01