



# Media Relations Guidelines

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| <b>Effective:</b>          | 04/27/1995                                             |
| <b>Prior Versions:</b>     | 09/25/2024                                             |
| <b>Responsible Office:</b> | Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications (SMC) |
| <b>Review By:</b>          |                                                        |

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## I. Purpose

The Media Relations Guidelines are designed to ensure clear, concise, factual, and consistent communication in response to all media inquiries. These guidelines establish the University's position regarding interactions with news media representatives.

For these guidelines, "news media" refers to representatives of newspapers, magazines, broadcast television and radio, podcasts, online publications, and social media presences (e.g., YouTube channels, Instagram) managed by media organizations or their employees.

Good media relations benefit both Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) and the community. When faculty and staff assist the media, they also help tell AUM's story to key audiences, build community support, and attract students. As a publicly funded institution, AUM has a responsibility to be accountable and accessible to the public.

## II. Policy

These guidelines provide a framework for protecting the University's reputation and enhancing its relationships with the media. By facilitating the exchange of accurate information, facts, or expert opinions, the University serves the public interest and promotes understanding of its mission.

## III. Applicability

These guidelines apply to all faculty, staff, office bearers of student organizations, and others employed by or associated with the University who may reasonably be assumed to represent AUM's official positions or opinions.

## IV. Responsibility

The Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications (SMC) is responsible for implementing and updating these guidelines, as necessary. Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees under their supervision are aware of and have access to this policy.

## V. Definitions

None

## **VI. Procedures**

### **i. Seeking Publicity**

Employees or departments seeking external publicity for programs, events, or achievements should first contact SMC, which will identify appropriate media outlets. SMC maintains relationships with local, state, and national media organizations.

### **ii. Media Inquiries**

SMC is responsible for initiating and responding to news media requests. Employees contacted directly by reporters should notify SMC immediately before responding.

### **iii. Faculty Experts**

Faculty contacted for expert comment on their teaching or research are encouraged to coordinate with SMC for in-person, phone and virtual interviews. SMC staff may monitor in-person interviews and help coordinate logistics. While reporters may reach out directly, SMC can provide support to faculty and staff upon request.

### **iv. Official University Representation**

Only administrators or staff designated by SMC may officially represent the University to the media.

### **v. Sensitive Topics**

Requests concerning litigation, personnel matters, or unusual events must be reported to SMC immediately. This ensures the University is aware of potential issues and can respond appropriately.

### **vi. Interview Support**

SMC provides support in preparing for interviews but does not alter or restrict the content faculty or staff provide to the media.

### **vii. Expert Referrals**

If a reporter seeks an expert source, faculty or staff should refer them to SMC, which maintains a list of approved subject matter experts.

### **viii. Campus Access**

When on AUM property, media representatives should be accompanied by SMC staff or a designated University employee. Access to restricted areas (e.g., residence halls, Wellness Center) requires SMC accompaniment.

### **ix. Privacy and Compliance**

AUM complies with all federal and state laws regarding the release of personal and educational records, including FERPA.

### **x. Events and Announcements**

Press releases, press conferences, and University statements related to campus events or media interest will be managed by SMC. Managers must ensure compliance

with this policy while safeguarding academic freedom and freedom of expression.

**xi. Photography and Video Authorization**

AUM obtains consent from individuals featured in photos or videos intended for publicity. This consent covers use in publications, social media, websites, and advertising.

**xii. Issuance of Institutional Statements**

As a public institution, AUM exercises caution in issuing statements on political or societal matters. The University or Chancellor may release statements only when events directly affect AUM's mission or the safety and well-being of its community.

Faculty or staff not designated as official University spokespeople should refrain from making statements that imply an official University position. Media requests should be directed to SMC.

**xiii. Release of Information to the Public**

Certain information must not be released by AUM employees. All such inquiries should be referred to SMC, which will coordinate with appropriate University officials.

- i. Student Records – FERPA restricts disclosure. AUM may release only limited directory information (dates of attendance, major, degree awarded).
- ii. Faculty and Staff Records – Name, title, department, and salary are public records. All other details are confidential unless authorized.
- iii. Contracts and Grants – Contracts are public documents; however, results of funded work may be confidential. SMC will coordinate with project directors and Finance.
- iv. Litigation and Law Enforcement – Employees must not comment on lawsuits involving AUM. Media inquiries on such matters will be cleared with the Chancellor and general counsel. Law enforcement inquiries will be coordinated with Campus Police through SMC.

**VII. Sanctions**

None

**VIII. Exclusions**

None

**IX. Interpretation**

Questions about the interpretation of this policy should be directed to the Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications (SMC).

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Signature

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Date