



Title:

Media Policy

Version	1.0
TRIM file number	08/145
Short description	A policy on the governance and management of media relations within the University.
Relevant to	All employees
Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible officer	Director, Corporate Affairs
Responsible office	Office of Corporate Affairs
Date introduced	23 July 2008
Date(s) modified	
Next scheduled review date	23 July 2011
Related University documents	Code of Conduct Media Style Guide How to Work with the Media Style Manual
Related legislation	Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Copyright Act 1968 Copyright Amendment Act 2006 Defamation Act Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 Charles Sturt University Act 1989 Charles Sturt University By-law 2005
Key words	policy, reputation, corporate positioning, branding, media, media relations, marketing media, corporate communication, public comment, public critique, press, press release, media release, news release, media outlets, communication, legislation, privacy, defamation, discrimination, vilification, code of conduct

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This documents sets out Charles Sturt University's (CSU's) policy on governance of public engagement through the media.
- 1.2 Effective communication with the media is critical to CSU's ability to meet its strategic objectives and to promote continued public support.
- 1.3 The aim of public engagement through the media is to communicate and build the University's public reputation for excellence in teaching and research.
- 1.4 Effective media relations supports the strategic objectives of the University by providing information in a timely manner that is accurate and of a high quality and serves to:
 - (a) inform the public of what the University can do for them including promoting the University's courses, services, achievements, activities and events of significance;
 - (b) enhance public awareness and understanding of research and issues of public importance;
 - (c) improve the understanding and general visibility of the University with the public and key stakeholders;
 - (d) build the reputation of the University with the public and key stakeholders;
 - (e) ensure that appropriate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents and issues of a controversial and/or sensitive nature.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all staff.

3. GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 The Vice-Chancellor, as chief executive officer of the University, has overall responsibility for maintaining and building the reputation of the University consistent with the University Strategy and for all corporate communication strategies and policies including corporate branding, marketing, positioning and messaging.

4. TYPES OF MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 Public engagement with the media can occur in a number of ways:
 - (a) individual academic or professional officers providing comment or critique in their acknowledged area of professional expertise (public comment);
 - (b) the production of media releases, statements and copy to promote the University's courses and services, its achievements (including the achievements of individual academic or other staff, graduates and students), its research initiatives and outcomes and events and activities (news and marketing media);

- (c) communication around issues that have general campus or University-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature [for example, corporate comment on Government higher education policy] (corporate communication).

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 5.1 The primary object of a University is the creation, extension and dissemination of knowledge. CSU values active public engagement by academic and professional officers through the media in a consistent and professional manner.
- 5.2 Clause 9 of the *Code of Conduct* sets out the rights and responsibilities of officers with respect to public comment. CSU officers are accountable for their public comments and must ensure that public comments are independent, non-discriminatory, honest and consistent with the *Code of Conduct*.
- 5.3 The Media Relations Office in the Division of Marketing has primary responsibility for supporting academic and other professional officers to engage effectively and professionally with the media on behalf of CSU.
- 5.4 All requests for academic comment by the media should be referred to the Media Relations Office in the Division of Marketing.
- 5.5 Where academic or professional officers are requested to provide media comment directly, they are free to respond to requests regarding research, scholarship or teaching within their acknowledged area of professional expertise in accordance with the *Code of Conduct*.
- 5.6 An academic or professional officer who is requested to provide comment to the media should liaise with the Media Relations Office to ensure that, if there are follow-up inquiries, the University response is coordinated and consistent.
- 5.7 The Media Relations Office may request academic or professional officers with expertise in a particular area to make themselves available to provide comment or critique in their acknowledged area of professional expertise. This may be in response to a request from the media or through analysis of topical issues.
- 5.8 The Office of the Vice-Chancellor may request an academic or professional officer to contribute an independent view in their acknowledged area of professional expertise in relation to a corporate matter or the positioning of the University.

6. NEWS AND MARKETING MEDIA

- 6.1 The Media Relations Office in the Division of Marketing is responsible for news production and dissemination and has primary responsibility for media production in support of the University's marketing strategies.
- 6.2 The role of the Media Relations Office is to support the promotion of the University through activities including:

- (a) managing the CSU News Portal (see clause 11) and providing news releases;
- (b) developing and implementing media promotion plans for faculties, research centres, business enterprises and heads of campus;
- (c) offering advice to faculties, research centres, business enterprises and heads of campus on issues impacting on and involving their areas;
- (d) monitoring media outlets, and assessing and reporting on CSU-related material;
- (e) liaising with news and media staff at local, national and international levels and, subject to clause 11, coordinating the distribution of media releases for the University, working collaboratively with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor;
- (f) assisting academic and professional officers, and other senior officers, in preparing comment and critique for release;
- (g) assisting academics and professional officers, and other senior officers, to prepare for media interviews, including providing training or mentoring;
- (h) assessing and writing media releases;
- (i) monitoring the performance and impact of media promotion of the University;
- (j) supporting critical incident management in accordance with clause 9.

6.3 The Media Relations Office may authorise University officers (for example, the Director of Planning and Audit or the Executive Director, Student Administration) to speak to the media, or be quoted in their official capacities, as required in support of promotional media or marketing activities. This does not apply to the provision of independent public comment and critique by academic and professional officers under clause 5.

6.4 In developing and coordinating promotional media the Media Relations Office is responsible for exercising professional judgment about newsworthiness (that is, the likelihood of a story being accepted and published, or followed up, by a media outlet).

6.5 Subject to clause 6.4, the Media Relations Office is responsible for ensuring that Faculty and Centre course offerings and research activities are covered in a balanced and fair manner.

7. CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

7.1 The Office of Corporate Affairs is responsible for supporting the Vice-Chancellor, and senior officers of the University, by providing strategic advice on corporate reputation and positioning matters, including the alignment of communication strategies and stakeholder relations objectives including:

- (a) assisting the development of corporate positions, key messages and corporate communication strategies that support the University's branding, strategic initiatives, stakeholder alignment and reputation building;
 - (b) providing advice on other critical or significant communication matters.
- 7.2 The Office of the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for providing operational support for corporate communication to the Vice-Chancellor including:
- (a) developing, recommending and implementing corporate communication and media plans;
 - (b) writing media releases, speeches and opinion pieces and assisting in the preparation of public comment;
 - (c) organising media conferences and interviews;
 - (d) writing and publishing the Annual Report;
 - (e) overseeing the preparation of corporate level documents to ensure alignment with corporate communication and reputation goals;
 - (f) in cooperation with the Media Relations Office, establishing and maintaining effective relations with key media at local, national and international levels relevant to the corporate communication goals of the Vice-Chancellor;
 - (g) monitoring the outcome of University communications in relation to University goals;
 - (h) supporting critical incident management in accordance with clause 9;
 - (i) supporting Official University Spokespersons as above.

8. UNIVERSITY SPOKESPERSONS

- 8.1 The Vice-Chancellor is the Principal Official University Spokesperson on matters relating to the governance, strategies and management of the University. The Vice-Chancellor has priority in all media communications and may exercise any authority conferred under this Policy.
- 8.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellors are designated as Official University Spokespersons and are authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to convey the official University position on corporate issues that have general University-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature.
- 8.3 The heads of each campus are designated as Official University Spokespersons and are authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to convey the official University position on campus issues that have campus-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature. Where necessary or convenient, the Vice-Chancellor may authorise a Deputy Vice-Chancellor or other senior officer located at a campus or facility

as Official University Spokesperson for that campus or facility in addition to the head of campus.

- 8.4 The Director, Corporate Affairs and Senior Communications Officer in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor are designated as Official University Spokespersons and are authorised, after consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, to convey the official University position on issues of general University-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature.
- 8.5 The Vice-Chancellor (or the Director, Corporate Affairs for and on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor) may authorise other individual senior officers, or other officers of the University (eg. heads of research centres), to act as spokespersons for the University on a general or specific basis.
- 8.6 Subject to the above, Official University Spokespersons are authorised to engage with the media, or issue a media statement, without further approval on matters where the Vice-Chancellor has authorised a particular corporate position verbally or in writing.
- 8.7 Where the Vice-Chancellor has not authorised a particular corporate position, the Official University Spokesperson should consult with the Vice-Chancellor prior to speaking to the media or issuing a media statement.
- 8.8 In urgent cases, where communication with the Vice-Chancellor is not practicable under clause 8.7, Official University Spokespersons should discuss with the Director, Corporate Affairs the University's position prior to speaking to the media or issuing a media statement.
- 8.9 Inquiries from the media about corporate matters should be referred to the Senior Communications Officer in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor in the first instance.
- 8.10 A reference to an Official University Spokesperson is only for the purposes of this Policy and is not an official title to be used by those officers in media relations unless otherwise approved.

9. CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- 9.1 The detailed procedures for the management of critical incidents are set out in the *Critical Incidents Manual* and related procedure documents.
- 9.2 The Manager, Communication (Media Relations and Advertising) will designate a media officer for each campus or facility of the University from within the Media Relations Office (or such other officers within the Division of Marketing as may be approved by the Director of Marketing from time to time) with responsibility for media liaison in the case of a critical incident at, or in relation to, that campus or facility. The details of each designated media officer will be published on the CSU web site including their contact details in the case of a critical incident.
- 9.3 In the event of a critical incident at, or in relation to, a particular campus or facility, media communications will ordinarily be handled by the relevant media officer designated for that campus or facility by the Media Relations Office. The media officer will liaise with the Critical Response Group chair

and will be available at all times as the media liaison officer for critical incidents at, or in relation to, that campus or facility for the duration of the critical incident.

- 9.4 The media officer responsible for the critical incident will report the incident immediately to the Senior Communications Officer where, in the view of the media officer or chair of the Critical Response Group for that campus or facility, the critical incident has significant corporate level implications. In all other cases, the media officer will report the critical incident as soon as is reasonably practicable to ensure the Vice-Chancellor and senior executive can be updated on the matter by the Senior Communications Officer in case they are appearing in the media for another purpose and are asked a question about the matter.
- 9.5 The Senior Communications Officer may, where in his or her opinion the incident has significant corporate implications, assume overall coordination and control of communication management for the incident. In this case, the media officer will remain available to assist the Senior Communications Officer locally to manage on-the-ground responses.

10. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- 10.1 The University must act professionally and legally at all times in its communications with the public.
- 10.2 Officers are responsible for seeking legal advice through the Legal Unit in the Division of Finance prior to making or publishing public comments if they do not understand, or require clarification, of the legality of any comment or critique.
- 10.3 Officers engaged in the provision of public comment or critique, whether via the media or otherwise, or release of communications for the University will ensure that they comply with relevant legal obligations in place in the jurisdiction in which they are communicating (whether in an Australian State or Territory, Canada, or other overseas location) at all times. In particular, officers will:
- (a) ensure the protection of the privacy of individuals and information concerning individuals where that information has not been expressly authorised for release;
 - (b) ensure that the copyright and moral rights of the owners of original works are not infringed and the reproduction of copyrighted materials is consistent with relevant copyright laws;
 - (c) avoid defamatory or libellous communications that:
 - (i) identify a person or corporation and convey a meaning which tends to lower that person's or corporation's reputation in the eyes of the community;
 - (ii) lead people to ridicule, avoid or despise that person or corporation; or

- (iii) injure that person's or corporation's reputation in business, their trade or profession;

regardless of whether the officer intended to defame a person (but rather whether a reasonable person who hears or reads the comments or critique would understand or infer from the communication the above);

- (d) avoid comments or critique that may be viewed as discriminating against, or vilifying a person (that is, inciting hatred, contempt or severe ridicule of a person) on an unlawful ground (for example, on the ground of a person's race, ethnicity, gender, homosexuality, transgender status, disability, carer status (actual, presumed or perceived) or association with the above);

- (e) ensure that the publication or communication of information regarding preference and enrolment figures accords with UAC and VTAC requirements.

- 10.4 Officers are reminded that legal obligations differ markedly in each State and Territory of Australia, and as between different countries, in which their comments or critique may be published or communicated. Officers need to be mindful of the legal obligations in the jurisdiction where the public comment is being made and where it is likely to be published.

11. MANAGEMENT OF CSU NEWS PORTAL

- 11.1 CSU News Online is a shared University tool for the publication and distribution of CSU media releases, statements, features and event information.
- 11.2 The Media Relations Office is responsible for the day to day operational management of CSU News Online.
- 11.3 The Vice-Chancellor may approve, on recommendation of the Division of Marketing or Office of Corporate Affairs, an individual officer to have publishing rights on CSU News Online where the Vice-Chancellor is satisfied that the Officer has the appropriate media skills to do so on behalf of a Faculty, School, Centre, Office or Institute of the University.
- 11.4 Official University Spokespersons may approve the text of any official communication via the CSU News site at any time. The Media Relations Office shall ensure that the release is transmitted in the form approved and in accordance with any direction provided by the Official University Spokesperson (including as to the scope of distribution [eg. regional, national or to a specific subject grouping] and the timeframe in which the matter is to be released).
- 11.5 The Media Relations Office is responsible for ensuring that CSU News Online is accessible to all approved officers under this Policy in a timely and efficient manner and that appropriate training is provided in the proper use of the portal.

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 12.1 The Media Relations Office is responsible for quality assurance of all media releases or statements distributed by the University within its own area of responsibility.
- 12.2 The Office of the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for quality assurance of all media releases or statements distributed by the University within its own area of responsibility.
- 12.3 Where an area of the University is authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to issue a media release or statement in accordance with clause 11.3, the relevant Senior Executive Officer (eg. Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor) to which that area reports is responsible for quality assurance of all media releases or statements issued by that area.
- 12.4 Academic and professional officers are responsible for quality assurance of public comment and critique in accordance with this Policy. Where public comment or critique is made via a media release or statement, the Media Relations Office or Office of the Vice-Chancellor (depending on the area responsible for production of the relevant media release or statement) is responsible for quality assurance of any media release or statement produced in support of the public comment or critique.
- 12.5 Quality assurance means:
- (a) the media release or statement has been reviewed by the author of the comments and at least one other officer more senior to the author where possible or by the:
 - (i) Director, Corporate Affairs, Office of Corporate Affairs;
 - (ii) Manager, Communication (Media Relations and Advertising), Division of Marketing; or
 - (iii) Senior Communications Officer, Office of the Vice-Chancellor;
 - (b) the media release or statement conform to the requirements of this Policy;
 - (c) the media release or comment conform to the Style Manual.

13. PROCEDURES

- 13.1 This Policy aims to define the governance framework for media management within the University. This Policy replaces any previous media policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 13.2 It is expected that specific procedures and guidelines will be developed to support the objectives set out in this Policy for approval by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 13.3 This Policy has precedence over any procedure or guideline.

14. DELEGATION AND AUTHORISATION

- 14.1 Under clause 17 of the *Charles Sturt University By-law 2005* the Vice-Chancellor has been delegated specific responsibility and authority by the Council for the promotion of the interests of the University.
- 14.2 The Vice-Chancellor authorises officers specified in this Policy to perform the functions listed for and on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.
- 14.3 The Director, Corporate Affairs and/or the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer may authorise a media release for and on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor at any time. Sub-clause 11.4 applies to any media release authorised under this clause.

Table of amendments

Version number	Date	Short description of amendment
1.0	23/7/08	Approved by Vice-Chancellor