

BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Butler University Policy for Responding to Media Inquiries

Responsible Office: Office of the President, Director of Strategic Communication

Effective Date: October 1, 2022

PURPOSE

To ensure that the appropriate spokespeople are representing the University and that all messages represent the University's official position, media inquiries should be channeled through the Director of Strategic Communication in the Office of the President. This policy was established to outline the process for interacting with the news media in a professional capacity (representative of Butler University) on a proactive and reactive basis. This policy does not prevent employees from talking to the media outside of their professional role at Butler, nor does it infringe upon academic freedom as outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#) whereas faculty are able to speak from their areas of expertise as long as they are clear that they are not speaking for Butler University. For the purpose of this policy, news media shall refer to representatives of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online publications, television, and radio. "Employee" refers to all faculty and staff members, whether full-time, part-time, or adjunct.

This policy does not pertain to Department of Athletics personnel (e.g. coaches, sports information directors) who routinely communicate with news media as a part of their daily responsibilities.

POLICY

Proactive Communications

An employee or department that seeks to publicize a program, event or achievement should contact the Director of Strategic Communication, who will work with campus collaborators (social media, website, Office of Advancement, college designees, etc.) to identify the appropriate communication channels for sharing the news, including news media. It is the responsibility of the Director of Strategic Communication to initiate contact with reporters, editors and producers. In some instances (e.g., the employee has a pre-existing relationship with a reporter), the employee will be granted permission to directly share the information with specific news media outlets.

The Director of Strategic Communication will work with the employee to identify talking points, provide media training, and develop a press release, if necessary. They will also coordinate a date and time for an interview to take place, and may attend the interview if requested, or if the topic to be discussed is of a sensitive nature.

Reactive Communications

It is the responsibility of the Director of Strategic Communication to respond to news media inquiries and to manage those interactions. When an employee or department is contacted by the news media, they should notify the Director of Strategic Communication immediately, before providing any information or responding to questions.

Faculty who are directly contacted by news media for:

1. Comment(s) as an expert on topics relating to their areas of study or expertise are encouraged to coordinate through the Director of Strategic Communication, but are not required to do so. Alerting the Director of Strategic Communication will allow for further amplification of the story via the University's internal and external communications channels.
2. Communications with news media on behalf of the University, or in a manner that officially represents or appears to represent the University, must be coordinated by the Director of Strategic Communication.

The Director of Strategic Communication maintains a database of staff and faculty subject matter experts, and relies on that database to identify the appropriate spokesperson for a variety of topics. If you would like to be included in the subject matter expert database, please complete and submit a profile using our [online form](#).

While on University property, news media representatives should, if necessary and appropriate, be accompanied by the Director of Strategic Communication or a University employee or their designee.

To gain access to the residence halls, news media representatives must be accompanied by the Director of Strategic Communication or their designee. Access to residence halls will be granted for very limited circumstances, and will be pre-approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs.

If a campus event attracts news media interest, all press releases and statements to the news media will be routed through and disseminated by the Director of Strategic Communication. It is the responsibility of each dean and department head to implement procedures to comply with this policy, while also ensuring that academic freedom, free inquiry, and freedom of expression within the academic community are respected and observed.