



## **BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY**

**Responsibility:** Director of Communications, Marketing, and External Relations

**Approval:** Board of Trustees/College Council

**Approval Date:** November 27, 2012

### **Introduction**

This policy will guide media relations at Brescia University College (the “University”) and ensure consistent, controlled, and approved messaging across campus. Brescia will endeavour to provide open and equal access to all news media, consistent with having accurate information on subjects that might be of interest to our audiences and in recognition that confidentiality will be observed where needed to protect our students and other stakeholders.

### **Purpose**

This policy identifies designated University spokespeople, outlines the process that we follow in disseminating information and in responding to unsolicited media requests, and the ways in which we ensure consistency in our communications efforts.

### **Scope**

This policy applies equally to all Brescia departments, to the Board of Trustees, the Foundation, the Alumnae Association, and The Circle Women’s Centre. Nothing in this policy shall contravene Brescia’s Policy on Academic Freedom, as negotiated by the Brescia Faculty Association.

### **Policies**

The Principal, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Director of Communications, Marketing, and External Relations are authorized, by virtue of their positions, to speak on behalf of Brescia University College to the media. On occasion these spokespeople might delegate this capacity to another member of the Brescia community whose area of expertise might more closely align with the subject of interest. Faculty members will also be invited to speak with the media about their academic areas of expertise.

Anyone who is contacted by a member of the media seeking comment on behalf of Brescia should contact the Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department for guidance, prior to making a statement.

The Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department should be notified about any potentially sensitive, contentious, or controversial media inquiries with respect to Brescia University College.

## **Principles**

1. Brescia University College is a public institution that is accountable for its actions.
2. The University responds promptly to media enquiries and is always truthful when dealing with the media.
3. The University is proactive in developing positive media coverage to allow it to communicate with the community it serves, build support for its core objectives, and enhance its reputation.
4. The University responds quickly to limit potential damage to the University caused by adverse or incorrect media coverage.
5. The University has an obligation to protect itself and its staff and students from unfair intrusion by the media.
6. Notwithstanding the rights of individuals to freedom of speech within the law, faculty, staff, administrators, and students of the University have an obligation to act in the best interests of the University at all times.

## **Contact with the media by Brescia employees as private individuals**

1. The University affirms the right of employees to interact freely with the media as private individuals.
2. When employees discuss with the media, or write about, matters outside their areas of work, they will not purport to be representing Brescia.
3. When employees speak to the media on their own behalf, or on behalf of organizations not associated with their work at the University, University property must not be used as a backdrop for filming or photographic purposes.
4. The University could be held liable for defamatory comments or libelous statements made by an employee; therefore, employees must exercise caution to ensure any comments and statements they make do not have legal consequences for the University.

## **Media enquiries about areas of academic expertise**

1. Faculty members are encouraged to respond to media enquiries related to their areas of academic expertise and are not required to seek permission before doing so. When they have been approached by the media, Faculty members are invited to seek advice about messaging from the Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department. This also helps the Department track media coverage for quarterly media reports.
2. Some media enquiries about an academic matter might also relate more broadly to the University. In such cases, or where the faculty member has any doubt about whether he or she may answer the enquiry, the matter should be referred to the Director of Communications, Marketing, and External Relations.
3. Faculty members who answer a media enquiry as an academic expert shall not purport to speak on behalf of Brescia unless specifically authorized to do so. A statement of affiliation with, or position in Brescia University College, or of qualifications relevant thereto, shall not be construed as an attempt to speak on behalf of Brescia.
4. Faculty members are encouraged to provide the media with their academic titles when they are commenting as academic experts.
5. A faculty member who intends to publish a statement, research results, or an opinion piece that in his or her opinion might reasonably be expected to invite intense public scrutiny may wish, in order to allow timely response by the College, to inform the Principal in advance of the publication date, if doing so is practicable and reasonable.

Such a provision of information would be entirely voluntary and by no means required or expected. In the event of receiving such information, neither the Principal nor Brescia University College will attempt in any way to dissuade the faculty member from releasing his or her statement, nor shall the release of this material be hindered by Brescia in any way, either overtly or subtly. In the event of faculty statements causing intense public scrutiny where no such advance notice was provided to the Principal, the faculty member shall be subject to no sanction or censure because of the lack of notice.

### **Visits to the campus by the media**

1. In circumstances where the media wish to visit the campus or any University facility in relation to enquiries as outlined above, the employee who has been approached is required to consider whether the visit might impinge on the work or study activities of other members of the University community. If so, the employee must take reasonable steps to ensure that the relevant people are consulted, and that appropriate agreement to the arrangements for the visit are made, with disruption to the work of others being kept to a minimum.
2. When an employee hosts a media visit that is likely to lead to wider media interest, he/she should consult the Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department at the earliest opportunity.

### **Interaction with the media as an official spokesperson of the University**

1. Only the Principal, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Director of Communications, Marketing, and External Relations, or Brescia community members formally authorized by them (either generally or on particular matters), may provide official comment to the media on behalf of the University.
2. All media enquiries for official Brescia University College responses pertaining to University policies, operations, and issues received by employees must be directed to the Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department, who will, in consultation with the Principal where appropriate, determine a spokesperson to address the enquiry. This spokesperson is then responsible for coordinating the gathering of relevant information and communicating with the media.
3. Any employee who becomes aware of an issue or event that has the potential to impact significantly on the University's reputation or stakeholder relationships must notify the Director of Communications, Marketing, and External Relations Department immediately.