

INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING POLICIES

I. POLICY STATEMENT

This University Policy will enhance Auburn University's image through a stronger relationship between central communications and marketing and decentralized communicators and marketers to produce external messages of consistently high quality that are strongly connected to university positioning, branding, and other strategic priorities.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This University Policy intends to:

- Maximize opportunities to enhance visibility or stories;
- Ensure all information follows design and AP news style standards;
- Provide more central resources to assist campus communicators;
- Combine efforts and improve information flow;
- Create stronger relationships among communicators;
- Make information flow more efficient as part of newly established Efficiency Task Force goals, and
- Reduce errors and miscommunication.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

March 2011

V. POLICY MANAGMENT

Responsible Office: [Office of Communications & Marketing](#) (OCM)

Responsible Executive: [Deedie Dowdle](#)

Responsible Officer: [Mike Clardy](#)

VI. DEFINITIONS

Evaluations: OCM will provide input for performance evaluations based on a summary of written contributions the primary college/school communicators' have made to university image advancement through news, image, and publication and promotional material, and participation in planning processes.

Hiring: New communicators hired must meet title and job description requirements already established for the Communications Specialist Job Family by Human Resources, with the primary role to identify and prepare stories. Graphic Designers and Multimedia Specialists will also meet requirements for those job families.

Searches: Staff from OCM will serve on and assist in search committees for communicators and provide input to department heads and deans.

Training: OCM will assist as needed in training new designers, webmasters and news writers for colleges/schools, asking other experienced communicators to share expertise, and chair ongoing Campus Communicators group to provide general resources and information.

Core Leadership Groups: OCM will establish and chair small, core news, design and web groups to share resources, expertise and information and obtain input from campus areas to improve quality of design, quantity and quality of news, and quality of web content and social media management.

Plans: OCM will review communications and marketing plans for colleges/schools/areas to see where additional resources might be provided, additional monetary support warranted, or opportunity might exist for broader visibility. An annual planning retreat of a core group of lead communicators and OCM team members will be hosted to facilitate more integrated plans.

Direct Report Areas: OCM will provide primary direction for communications and A/V in collaboration with the deans/director for:

- College of Human Sciences (shared funding)
- School of Nursing (shared funding)
- School of Pharmacy (shared funding)
- College of Sciences & Mathematics
- Auburn University Hotel

Priority Areas: OCM will continue to provide communications and marketing materials based on advance and ongoing planning in collaboration with key externally oriented areas, including:

- Enrollment Management/Admissions
- Development

Central Resources: OCM will provide resource materials for campus-wide use, and oversight of central, main-tier web pages and official university social media sites; all communicators are invited to use, contribute to, or participate in these offerings.

Commitment to Communicators: OCM will strive to work collaboratively with and to seek input on how to improve the success of campus communicators and marketers; those who contribute stories will be credited through bylines and evaluations input.

MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

(News Releases, Crisis Communications, Reporter Inquiries)

External News: All external promotional and news material (electronic or print) must be approved centrally; OCM will review publications and releases and periodically review web content for appropriate news, newsworthiness and/or design standards and work with areas on revisions or concerns.

Major News Stories: News of major import must be identified by decentralized communicators and/or deans and planned in conjunction with OCM well in advance (embargoes can be established or confidentiality assured for sensitive topics or when external partners are involved) so that senior administrators can be included, informed, and quoted as needed, and informed and announcements planned for major impact. Decentralized communicators may not send information, or releases, separately to media, as duplication and confusion, and sometimes outright error, can result. However, OCM will inform the communicators of specific colleges, schools and areas of opportunities and work with them to coordinate news opportunities.

News Releases: Externally targeted news releases must route through OCM, with an OCM contact and college/school/department contact listed on each one (note that writers/contributors will always be credited). A [news submission site](#) makes this process simpler and provides reminders about approvals. OCM reserves the right to edit news items for newsworthiness and style requirements.

- ❖ Development news releases, in addition to approval through OCM, must be approved by the dean and development; the news submission site provides these reminders.
- ❖ Research news: news related to research, in addition to central approval, must be approved by the dean and, when appropriate, sponsored programs and research communications to protect Intellectual Property and Sponsored Programs requirements. A reminder of this requirement is on [the news submission site](#).
- ❖ Legislative/federal funding news: News items containing information of import for legislators must be approved by the director of governmental relations (state) and director of public affairs (federal).

Incidents or Sensitive Issues: Incidents or stories that may lead to negative perception or publicity must be conveyed to OCM as soon as possible so facts can be gathered and timely responses can be made (also see crisis communications in this policy document).

Crisis Communications: OCM maintains a [crisis communications plan](#) which must be followed in a crisis situation; primary information flow during a crisis is disseminated from OCM in consultation with emergency responders, emergency management and public safety and senior administration. In the event a crisis or negative incident primarily affects one college/school/area, OCM will work with the dean and communicator (in conjunction with the provost) on response and resolution.

Reporter Inquiries and Media Response Procedure when “official” university responses or opinions are sought: When an “official” university response or opinion is sought by the media, the query must be deferred to OCM, which, in turn, will notify appropriate senior administrators.

General Media Queries and Response Procedure: OCM receives calls every day from reporters on a wide variety of topics; in general, reporters are accustomed to calling OCM first for assistance based on their

history of being able to get timely responses. In such situations, **OCM will defer to experts and refer reporters to campus contacts and communicators to encourage relationships with those who are the best sources** or area leaders for specific topics, and assist or respond for the person or area only when requested. Since several reporters often call about the same topic, or larger issues may be surrounding a particular issue unknown to other campus contacts, OCM advises those called directly to contact OCM about media calls so broader information can be shared. The Office of the Provost prefers academic units share these inquiries with OCM.

Faculty Responses to Media: OCM and the senior administration respect academic freedom. Faculty members are encouraged to talk with the media about their areas of expertise and are not required to seek advance approval. However, many faculty do ask for assistance or guidance regarding messaging, which OCM provides upon request. Also, it is suggested that faculty let deans or department chairs/heads and OCM know when reporter discussions occur so OCM can track the resulting story, share with the campus community, and/or enhance the visibility and opportunity. Faculty or staff members may not offer the “university’s” official response or “feelings about” a subject; university responses must come from the Office of the President.

Media Training: Protocol for handling crises, reporting incidents, and serving as spokespeople is established centrally and will be shared through ongoing media training seminars for deans, directors and department heads/chairs, as well as any interested members of the campus community.

ADVERTISING, MERCHANDISE, SIGNAGE, GRAPHIC IDENTITY & INSTITUTIONAL LOGO POLICIES

Television, Print Advertising and Promotional Materials: Print and broadcast advertising must be approved by OCM to ensure appropriate use of logos and content: Auburn University marks and logos must be used appropriately in print and advertising as per the [Auburn University Style Guide and Standards Manual](#), and as per the [Office of Trademarks & Licensing](#), which governs commercial and non-commercial use of Auburn's name and marks on merchandise and other materials.

Campus Signage: Auburn way-finding (directional) and building signage is produced by the [Office of Campus Planning and Space Management](#) under the Auburn University Campus Master Plan, and master "family of signs" standards.

The [Division of Student Affairs](#) manages the [On-Campus Advertising and Distribution Policy](#).

NON-PRESIDENTIAL AND NON-TRUSTEE EVENTS POLICY

Events Protocol and Central Events Resources: OCM establishes protocol and standards for major campus/community external events (non-presidential and non-trustee) and events to be hosted on-site, and assists areas in event planning and logistics when requested. Campus events are required to be posted on a central electronic events web site (**currently under construction**), being established in 2011 as a campus-wide resource for managing and planning events. OCM supervises logistics for major campus-wide events such as Commencement and Convocation, and serves as the liaison for city/campus events.

Summer camps and classes: Auburn hosts many summer camps and other community/outreach events and classes, managed by Outreach and other campus units. Policies related to Summer Camps can be found here: http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/documents/Summer_Camp_Policy_Manual.pdf

[Presidential and trustee events policies](#) are managed by the [Office of the Secretary to the Board of Trustees](#) and the [Office of the President](#).

WEB DESIGN AND USAGE POLICIES

Web Design and Updating Standards: Working with many campus areas, including the Office of Information Technology and area/unit/school web designers, OCM sets standards and primary design protocol that colleges/schools/areas must follow for the university website; all areas are required to keep content on sites updated as part of their communications/marketing priorities and to use the most current version of the [official university web template](#). Customized elements for distinct or non-traditional audiences can be planned with OCM to ensure cohesiveness with the university and universal navigation features. At a minimum, the university's universal branding header and associated gray navigation bar must be used in order to establish a website as an official Auburn University site.

Content Management Guidelines: A Content Management System will be administered and available through OIT in 2011 to make meeting web design standards, and using and updating websites easier campus-wide for those areas who wish to use it. Testing of navigation and features with target audiences is ongoing.

Web Protocol and Conditions for Official University Web Pages: using Auburn University web pages are a privilege, and certain requirements or standards of use in addition to design parameters must be followed. They are described in the [University Identification Standards Manual and Style Guide](#).

The [Office of Information Technology](#) manages policies covering other [appropriate uses of technology](#).

BRANDING GUIDELINES

University Brand Image: OCM will champion and protect the university brand, approving messages in concert with that brand and helping colleges, schools and areas customize their own positioning in conjunction with it. Major university messaging themes, which evolve over time and are based on strategic planning, will be shared with all communicators and marketers, with assistance and support for customizing those themes to help promote individual areas available on request. To date, messages consistent with past university branding include different variations of themes authentic to what Auburn constituents say means most to them about the university: for example, the Auburn Family and Auburn Creed themes (examples include "Welcome to the Family" in Student Affairs; Auburn Family 'All In' by Athletics; "It's a Family Thing" and "Believe" by enrollment management; Creed television spots and print designs). General themes may change or adapt in the future based on changing perceptions, branding research, or additional planning.

- OCM is committed to sharing information obtained through centrally funded research or other initiatives to all colleges and schools to help achieve their objectives.
- All university marks, icons and logos are owned by Auburn University and managed by the [Office of Trademarks & Licensing](#). Policies governing these markings can be found [here](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS

Auburn University has an extensive social media audience, and is actively engaged with official university accounts managed by the Office of Communications and Marketing in Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, YouTube, Flickr and other mediums. Colleges, schools and other campus areas often have pages or accounts connected to the primary AU social media sites, customized for their specific audiences. OCM is tasked by the Office of the President to monitor any social media sites using official university marks, identifiers, and logos and reserves the right, in most cases, to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, or misleading material, or material that conveys personal information or opinions in a way that can be construed as a university view. A more comprehensive social media policy and guidelines will soon be posted [here](#).

The [Office of Information Technology](#) develops mobile apps and hosts a web page showing all such applications. Any app requests need to be approved by OIT.