



Approved February 22, 2022

Next Scheduled Review February 22, 2027

---

## Procedure Summary

---

The primary purpose for establishing a messaging protocol for the University is to uphold the reputation of West Texas A&M University (WT) and The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) as well as to protect the privacy of WT administrators, students, faculty and staff, and adhere to Texas A&M University System Regulation 09.02.01. Per the TAMUS regulation, any and all official University messaging (including but not limited to signage, social media postings, press releases, news media interviews, and website postings) may be posted or disseminated solely by the University President or a delegate. Official messaging delegates include the Vice President for Philanthropy and External Relations (VP), the Assistant Vice President for Communication and Marketing (AVP), and the Senior Communications Specialist working with the aforementioned VP and AVP.

Strategic coordination of WT communications is essential for clear and consistent messaging. It is crucial for anticipating potential implications of various public announcements that are disseminated from the complex University setting. Strategic coordination will enhance the positive impact of timely, thoughtfully vetted communications that are aligned with **WT 125** and the University's mission and core values.

As WT grows, expands outreach to diverse audiences, and elevates the prestige of the WT Brand, it is important to strategically coordinate communications for proper messaging and strategic alignment.

[WT 125](#) should always be part of our messaging.

Messages, especially to external constituents, should be consistent with the University's overall [strategic plan, vision, mission, and core values](#), as well as representative of University Administration messaging for the institution.

Coordinating content, brand, and styles of University messaging for internal and external audiences helps ensure clear and consistent communication.

The Office of Communication and Marketing in the Division of Philanthropy and External Relations is responsible for knowing and correctly articulating the University voice and language for proper messaging, and has responsibility for strategic management and dissemination of media releases and all other communication tools and venues on behalf of WT.

---

## **Procedure**

---

### 1. RESPONSE STATEMENT

WT will respond to appropriate and reasonable media questions/inquiries effectively, accurately and on a timely basis to help promote and advance the University and its programs, activities and achievements. Responsibility for media engagement and strategy rests with the Assistant Vice President for Communication and Marketing and delegated to one of the Communication Specialists, part of the Communications team in the Office of Communication and Marketing. All media inquiries are managed centrally via this process. Communication and Marketing manages both reactive and proactive media relations.

### 2. PROMOTIONS

Promotional advertising and marketing on behalf of WT falls under the responsibility of the AVP, and matters regarding budgeting, purchasing and working with vendors and clients can be delegated to his/her Assistant or Senior Communication Specialist.

### 3. EXPERTS DIRECTORY

The Experts Directory listed on the homepage of the WT website is for internal and external use on topics when an expert opinion is needed. Faculty members who choose to be listed on the Experts Directory are agreeing to regularly provide an informational interview on matters of their field of expertise. Experts may be called on at any time during the work day for a request to interview via phone, remote access (Zoom, Teams, etc.), in person or on camera.

It is the responsibility of the Communication Specialist or AVP to contact the requested expert to coordinate potential media interview opportunities, prep the expert for

accurate information and strategic messaging, and escort media correspondent to the designated interview location. If not onsite, it is the responsibility of the Communication Specialist or AVP to communicate contact information and interview details such as time and location to both parties. It also is the responsibility of the Communication Specialist or AVP to update the Experts Directory on a regular basis.

#### 4. MEDIA INQUIRIES

All media inquiries must be immediately directed to the AVP or the Communication Specialist. This includes media inquiries or activities relating to the University, its services, research, students, faculty, staff or fundraising activities as well as inquiries involving an external group who wish to promote their relationship with WT. Administrators, students, faculty and staff are not encouraged to approach or speak to the media on behalf of WT without the approval of the AVP or the Communication Specialist. This includes conversations described as "off the record." The AVP or Communications Specialist will enable administrators, students, faculty and staff to be briefed before speaking to the media, ensuring consistency of all messages, providing timely, accurate and appropriate responses to media inquiries and maintaining professionalism among the University, TAMUS and media outlets.

Students who represent the University to the media, whether directly such as speaking to a reporter or indirectly such as appearing on camera without speaking, have a responsibility to uphold the reputation of the University with professionalism and respect.

The Communication Specialist is the primary liaison between the University and the media and is authorized to act as a spokesperson on matters of fact or clarification. The Communication Specialist will assess the media inquiry and draft the most appropriate response or action and identify the most appropriate spokesperson according to the Experts Directory or other resources. Responses are to be reviewed/approved by the AVP with final approval by the President or delegate. The Communication Specialist will confer the media response with the AVP, who may in some instances escalate the matter to the President and/or TAMUS upon assessment of the inquiry. It is the responsibility of Communication Specialist or AVP to collaborate with the TAMUS on matters deemed appropriate.

Media correspondents must coordinate all media activity involving any student, faculty or staff from the University with the Communication Specialist or designated media contact from the communications team. Reporters, photographers and all other personnel from media outlets are not allowed to engage or video students, faculty and staff without the permission of the Communication Specialist or communication team.

Media is not allowed building access unless granted permission from and escorted by a member of the University communications team.

## 5. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The staff members in the Office of Communication and Marketing are experienced in managing and accessing the media opportunity, identifying the most relevant spokesperson and ensuring that all necessary approvals and consent requirements are considered in developing a response. Communication and Marketing manages both reactive and proactive media relations.

*While only authorized individuals would speak publicly on behalf of WT, the University recognizes the rights and responsibilities that flow from the exercise of academic freedom. Faculty members contacted by journalists are free to grant an interview if they feel prepared to do so and as long as they inform the Office of Communication and Marketing.*

Contacts:

Kelly Carper Polden, [kpolden@wtamu.edu](mailto:kpolden@wtamu.edu), 651-2125

Chip Chandler, [cchandler@wtamu.edu](mailto:cchandler@wtamu.edu), 651-2124

---

## **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

---

[TAMUS regulation 09.02.01 Official Messaging](#)

---

## **Revision History**

---

Approved February 22, 2022

Revised [insert date]

---

## **Contact Office**

---

Office: Communication and Marketing

(806) 651-2125

---

**Approval Office**

---

Office of the President  
(806) 651-2100

---

**Approval Signature**

---



---

President/CEO

February 28, 2022  
Date