

**AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Policy Number: 99:027	Supersedes Policy Number: 99:027
Date: September 17, 2009	Dated: September 7, 2000
Subject: Media (With Regard to Campus Emergencies and Crisis Situations)	Mandatory Review Date: September 17, 2014
Initiating Authority: Vice President for Legal Affairs and Strategic Planning	TBR Policy/Guideline Reference:
Approved:  <p style="text-align: center;">President: Signature on File</p>	

**PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for APSU faculty and staff regarding media access and release of information during crisis or emergency situations involving the APSU community. The guidelines particularly address circumstances requiring the release of information about individuals (APSU students and employees) so as to ensure compliance with FERPA (Family Educational Right to Privacy) and to respond, accurately and completely, to press inquiries during and after crisis situations at or about APSU.

**POLICY**

While it is the philosophy of APSU to be as open and informative as possible, providing all relevant information that does not violate our obligation to protect student privacy or that of faculty and staff, we are an educational institution and our first order of business is to provide those educational services with as little disruption as possible. Therefore, it is Austin Peay State University's policy that, in certain crisis or emergency situations, media requests for access to the University (including students, faculty, staff) be referred to the Office of Public Relations and Marketing. Staff in the office will assess each request and advise the media on steps to take for access to campus information. This policy does not apply to normal media requests for information from a faculty member about matters in his/her field, and is in no way designed to limit one's civil liberty or academic freedom.

**GUIDELINES**

**Breaking News/Crisis Situations:** If a situation exists where a major news story or a potential situation or widespread public interest about APSU arises, please contact:

1. Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing\*
2. Communications Specialist Public Relations and Marketing\*
3. Vice President for Legal Affairs and Strategic Planning or other appropriate Vice President\*

Once notified, staff in the Public Relations and Marketing Office (in collaboration with the appropriate Vice President and President) will designate the University spokesperson who will serve as the official news source.

1. **Release of Information:**  
If a student or family member is involved in the situation, the Office of Public Relations and Marketing, along with the Dean of Students or other Student Affairs representative will secure proper permission before releasing any information about the student, other than information already available to the public. It is the policy of APSU not to release any opinions and/or statements about the student's grades, behavior or other personal information without the permission of the student.
2. **Substantiation of Facts:**  
Staff in the Office of Public Relations and Marketing, together with the primary contacts listed above, will begin a rapid process to evaluate the circumstances of each story. Other APSU personnel will be involved, when appropriate.
3. **Communication with the Media:**  
An official representative on the issue in question may be asked to work with appropriate University staff and the news media. This person will be responsible for providing timely, accurate information about the situation. Each spokesperson should work closely with the Office of Public Relations and Marketing, the designated Vice President and others to assure everyone is disseminating the same information.

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

During Breaking News, Emergency, or Crisis Situations:

If anyone at the University is contacted by the media, please contact the Office of Public Relations and Marketing immediately.\* If the inquiry is after business hours (and it cannot wait until regular work hours), you may telephone the Executive Director or Communication Specialist of Public Relations and Marketing or the Vice President for Legal Affairs and Strategic Planning on their home or mobil phone as listed in the emergency contact list. All Vice Presidents, Deans and staff in the President's Office have a listing of emergency contact numbers with home and mobile numbers for this purpose.

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\* Contact information for university employees listed are located at [http://www.apsu.edu/policy/Sen\\_Admin.htm](http://www.apsu.edu/policy/Sen_Admin.htm)

It is best to be armed with all facts before talking with a reporter. Although you may be involved directly in an incident or issue, you may not be aware of all the facts or of laws involving right-to-privacy, etc. Thus, if you are contacted by the media with reference to campus emergencies, etc., please notify the Public Relations and Marketing Office regarding how or if to respond.

Please remember to tell the reporter, courteously, that you (or someone else at the University) will get back in touch as quickly as possible. Although we do not want to give any impression of withholding information intentionally, we must follow procedures to verify fact so as to provide accurate responses and protect the rights of individuals.

**Media Access to All Areas of APSU Campus During Emergency, Crisis Situations:** When media (including broadcast media) want to enter any area of APSU to interview, film or photograph on campus, the Office of Public Relations and Marketing should be contacted.

With necessary consultation, staff in this office will make arrangements for media representatives to have access to the appropriate locations or individuals. This ensures the media has access without disturbing classes or other on-campus activities.

If an interview or information on students is requested, staff in the Office of Public Relations and Marketing first must obtain their consent, which may require going through the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. We ask the media to allow adequate time for University officials to comply with their requests.

Please refer unescorted media representatives on campus to the Public Relations and Marketing Office immediately.\*

Media may film outside and should be permitted to do so as long as they don't obstruct traffic or parking or disturb campus activities.

Be as open and informative as possible, providing all relevant information that does not violate our obligation to protect student privacy or that of APSU personnel.

If you have any questions about these procedures, telephone the Director or Assistant Director of Public Relations/Office of Marketing.\*

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