Media Relations Policy and Procedures

As a public institution, the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, its programs, activities, and plans are of special interest to the public. It is important to present the University in a manner that is both accurate and consistent with the University’s mission. Therefore, it is the University’s responsibility to provide accurate and consistent information to avoid any misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or confusion.

In the interest of orderly, consistent and proactive management of the information released to the Media, the following policy and procedures are in effect:

Policy
The primary University Spokesperson is the Director of University Relations (808-974-7567; cell: 808-286-0461). In the Director’s absence, the Director of Media Relations (808-974-7642; cell: 808-987-1043) will serve in that capacity.

The University Spokesperson will provide broad, general information in responses to University inquiries. However, for matters that require more detailed information, Administrators and Faculty will respond accordingly.

Procedures
Responses to Inquiries from the Media

1. Deans, directors, faculty, and staff will not respond to inquiries from the media concerning matters such as personnel issues, crisis management, emergencies, University policies and fiscal operations. Instead, such inquiries should immediately be directed to the respective Vice Chancellor or Administration, who will respond accordingly. The University Spokesperson should also be notified so that the Chancellor’s Office (Private Secretary or Executive Assistant to the Chancellor) is also notified of such inquiries.

2. Deans, directors, faculty, and staff may respond directly to media inquiries on ordinary, day-to-day matters such as course information, awards, special events, scholarships, publications, etc. However, all inquiries should be reported immediately to the Director of Media Relations by telephone (974-7642).
The University Spokesperson will:

- be informed promptly when any member of the UH Hilo community receives inquiries from the news media
- keep the Chancellor and other senior administrators informed of all relevant media situations and inquiries
- consult with the Chancellor to prepare statements for the Chancellor to release to the media
- inform the UH Office of External Affairs (808-956-8109) of all relevant media situations and inquiries

The Director of Media Relations will:

- distribute all University news releases, review and approve those prepared by other members of the University and check with relevant personnel [Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Dean, and/or designated contact person(s)] to ensure news releases are accurate and consistent
- keep the Chancellor and other senior administrators informed of all relevant media situations and inquiries by direct communication or through the University Spokesperson
- retain and file copies of all news releases distributed by UH Hilo, establishing a central locale for all University communication with the media
- ensure copies of all UH Hilo news releases are posted on the websites of UH Hilo and the UH System

The Sports Information Director is responsible for the Athletic Department’s news releases regarding athletic events and other department news. The Director of Media Relations is responsible for news releases involving personnel and fiscal matters.

Emergency Response Statement
In the event of an emergency, the Director of Media Relations will work with members of the Emergency Operations Staff (see UH Hilo Emergency Operations Plan [http://hilo.hawaii.edu/emergency/]) to gather information and coordinate distribution to University faculty, staff, students and the local community.
- Prepare and issue official statements regarding University operations to the Media
- Compose and distribute email notifications to the University community
- Work with the Webmaster to provide emergency updates on the UH Hilo Webpage and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Following initial notifications of emergency, the Director of Media Relations will prepare update notifications as needed.

Approved by the Chancellor:  
Donald O. Straney  
Date 9 April 13