

NSAC Media Relations Policy

Overview

As a public institution, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, its programs, activities and plans are of special interest to the general public. One of the important ways in which we promote the university, is through the mass media.

In order to ensure a professional relationship with the media, due diligence must be taken to ensure that information originating from the university is accurate, complete, reflects the official position of the institution and is released to the media and target publics in a timely manner.

The Public Relations Office is the first and primary contact for media. This responsibility includes finding the appropriate administrator or faculty member to comment on behalf of the institution or as an expert resource as needed. In the case of faculty experts, the PR office connects the news media (radio, newspaper, television, magazine, Web, etc.) with knowledgeable faculty sources.

The faculty members listed in our **Media Resources Guide** have agreed to be available for such interviews and key administrators serve as resource persons for a variety of institutional issues. Faculty members are encouraged to consider being listed in the Media Resources Guide.

When reporters are seeking a faculty expert, they usually call the PR office at (902) 893-7247. However, some reporters either do not know whom to call, or prefer to search for experts by calling faculty or students.

Employees of the university are also asked to contact the PR office when media crews and reporters are on campus. Please keep in mind that you are not required to talk to the media and if you are uncomfortable doing so, please contact our office and we will assist you.

Faculty and Staff Response to Media Calls

When a member of the news media contacts a faculty or staff member to comment on a topic that is within the employee's area of expertise (ie. about a faculty member's academic research or area of academic specialization) the employee may answer questions immediately, if so desired. However, if the faculty or staff member prefers to give some thought to the questions before answering, or if she/he has questions about the interview and how to respond, the PR office recommends the employee take the reporter's telephone number, inquire about the reporter's deadline and return the call later.

Faculty or staff faced with this situation may then contact the PR office. Staff will be glad to share information about the reporter, the angle the story is likely to take, other stories the reporter may be researching or writing at the time and any other background information that may be helpful in advance of the interview. While media representatives often work under deadlines, they sometimes can fax or e-mail questions in advance and a few may be willing to read direct quotes back to a source.

While it is optional for a faculty or staff member to contact the PR office **prior** to talking with a reporter about the employee's area of expertise, **it is very important that the PR office be notified immediately after** the faculty or staff member has spoken with a reporter. The PR office monitors and tracks the progress of all NSAC-related stories in order to help reporters find

sources and gather facts. Knowing to whom a reporter has talked will assist in the tracking process and it allows the office to provide the reporter with all pertinent information. NSAC is also a branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and the PR office routinely prepares briefing notes for the Minister of Agriculture on a variety of issues. Thus, it is essential that the Public Relations office be informed of any media relations activities occurring on campus.

The university has also retained the services of a professional media monitoring service. It is essential that we be informed of any potential or upcoming media interviews in an effort to inform this service. These "clippings" allow the Public Relations office to monitor key messages being communicated to the public and address any issues that may arise.

Institutional Response

When faculty and staff members are asked to comment or provide information on an institutional question or an issue that relates to the entire institution, the reporter should be referred to the PR Office. The Office will determine the appropriate spokesperson on behalf of the university and will refer the reporter to the appropriate source for comment. Only individuals specifically authorized to do so will publicly speak on behalf of the university.

The Public Relations office must be notified of all potentially sensitive, contentious or controversial media inquiries with respect to NSAC activities. The PR office will promptly identify the appropriate spokesperson and arrange for an interview or statement, as required.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

As a public body, NSAC falls under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP). Certain information must be provided - when requested - by members of the public and the news media subject to the conditions in the Act. Personal information on employees or students (current and former) cannot be automatically released. Requests may come from members of the public and the news media and there is a formal process for such requests.

As an institution within the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, NSAC also falls under the Routine Access Policy which may make certain requests for information that does not contain personal information more readily accessible.

For more information on FOIPOP requirements and restrictions and the Routine Access Policy please contact the NSAC FOIPOP coordinator Mr. Jim Goit at jgoit@nsac.ca or 893-7950.

News Releases and Master Campus Calendar

All new releases to be distributed to the media are disseminated by the PR office. To have a news release written and distributed to the media, please submit information and photos at least three weeks prior to an event and as soon as possible on other activities in order to meet print media deadlines. In addition, a Master Campus Calendar of Events is now available online. Information for the Calendar of Events or for news releases may be sent by campus mail to the PR office or by e-mail to news@nsac.ca.

News releases can be written on faculty or student accomplishments, an upcoming event, involvement in an outreach project that helps people in the community; innovative teaching

techniques; receipt of a major award or recognition and so on. It is difficult to be aware of all activities on campus, so we ask your assistance in keeping us informed. Please complete the form available at the following link and include it with your submission.
<http://nsac.ca/news/release/>

Crisis Communications

The Public Relations office should be notified of a crisis or any potential crisis immediately. During daytime hours, please contact Stephanie Rogers, (7247) or in her absence, Joanne Jordan (6721). NSAC has a comprehensive emergency procedures and crisis communication plan in place with an appropriate system of fan-out calls. During evening hours, any crisis situation should be communicated to the NSAC Security office at (4190).

A crisis is defined as any emergency or controversy that could negatively affect the public perception or reputation of the university. Emergencies include fires, accidents, explosion, tornadoes and other weather-related incidents and natural disasters. Controversies include: crimes against students, faculty or staff; suicides; student demonstrations; inappropriate conduct by faculty, staff or students; academic freedom issues; fiscal irregularities and personnel issues.

Public Relations Office

The PR office is able to assist and counsel the university community on a range of communication issues. In addition to media relations, the Public Relations office is responsible for a variety of publications, internal and external communications, editorial services, many special events and sponsorships and much more.

If we can be of service, please call us at 893-7247

Photo Release Forms and Requirements

One of the requirements of Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is to obtain photo release forms for all individuals involved in any visual representation of the university. The PR office is responsible for obtaining and housing these photo release forms. Any person using a photograph or representation of an individual for materials to be used on an NSAC affiliated website or publication must submit a completed photo release form to the Public Relations office

Click here to download a pdf version of the Photo Release form.
http://nsac.ca/development/photo_release_form.pdf

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