

PARKLAND COLLEGE	CATEGORY D	PERSONNEL AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
PUBLIC RELATIONS	POLICY #: OPR D-13	APPROVED: DECEMBER 5, 2011 REVIEWED:

## BACKGROUND

An effective communication strategy, both internally and externally, is an important part of the Parkland College marketing strategy.

Effective public relations best serve Parkland College by:

- Informing the public of College programs and services provided to the community;
- Promoting College achievements, activities and events of significance;
- Increasing awareness and visibility of Parkland College within the region and beyond;
- Providing the community with accurate information regarding incidents of a controversial and/or sensitive nature.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and accompanying procedures is to ensure that Parkland College:

- Conducts public relations in a manner that is objective, understandable, open and transparent within the law;
- Makes available the most appropriate spokesperson based on accountability and responsibility;
- Provides timely and accurate responses to media inquiries.

## TARGET CLIENTELE

### Internal

Students  
Parents  
Governing Boards  
Committees  
Unions  
Personnel

### External

Taxpayers  
Population of the region  
Local associations and organizations  
Government (civic, provincial and federal)  
Municipalities  
School boards  
Commercial enterprises  
Professional Associations  
Media

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**SCOPE**

This policy applies to Parkland College’s relationship with the general public, government officials and any news media professionals, including all print and broadcast media, online and social media.

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Parkland College recognizes that the actions of public policymakers impact our daily business operations. The College demands the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics from those representing the organization. The purpose of this guideline is to provide a foundation for communicating with government bodies at the civic, provincial and federal levels.

Statements on matters of policy and public interest on behalf of the College are the prerogative of the President and, in the President's absence, the Director, Finance & Administration or the Board Chair unless otherwise designated.

*1. Procedure in Response to a Request for Comment on Government Policy or Legislation*

- Obtain reporter’s contact information including:
  - Reporters name and who they work for
  - Contact number
  - Their deadline
  - Date and time the story is scheduled to run
  - The topic of the interview
- Contact Marketing and the President by email or phone message
- The President will determine the response to the issue and consult with the Board and/or Executive as necessary.
- The President will respond to the media question.
- Marketing will draft press release and distribute as necessary.

*2. Protocol for College Events*

When a representative from municipal, provincial or federal government is invited to and accepts an invitation to participate in a College event the President should be notified by email or phone.

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## CORPORATE MEDIA RELATIONS

### 1. *Official Spokespersons*

The President and Board Chair serve as the official Parkland College spokespersons and convey the official position on College-wide significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive in nature. Inquiries from the media about such issues should be referred to the Marketing Coordinator.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the president may designate another employee to serve as spokesperson on a particular issue.

### 2. *News Releases and Media Relations*

Marketing is solely authorized to handle news media interactions on behalf of the College as an institution. This includes writing and distributing Parkland College news releases and official College statements to the media; responding to or coordinating responses to inquiries from reporters; and scheduling interviews or news conferences.

The protocol for issuing news releases is –

- a) Identify potential news story.
- b) Have preliminary discussion with Marketing team.
- c) Marketing will draft the text using College guidelines.
- d) Marketing will distribute the news release, copy to relevant staff and post on the website.

### 3. *Guidelines for Staff*

Staff are free to respond to requests from the media regarding clarification and/or information on programs, services, activities and initiatives that relate specifically to their business area.

If the news story contains a corporate element and there is possibility for it to go provincial or federal a quote from the President is required. For example, if a story is picked up beyond the locale of the Parkland Region (Leader Post, Star Phoenix, Western Producer, CTV Regina and etc.) a piece should be supplied by the President in addition to information provided on the program or service.

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The following table provides some brief **examples** of media relation situations:

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Spokespeople</b>
Personnel issues	President, Director, Finance & Administration or Board Chair
Crisis management	President, Director, Finance & Administration or Board Chair
Emergency situations	President, Director, Finance & Administration or Board Chair
College policy or legal affairs	President, Director, Finance & Administration or Board Chair
Government policy	President, Director, Finance & Administration or Board Chair
Factual information regarding programs and services	<p>Director - shall speak on behalf of his/her area of accountability and responsibility as the chief spokesperson for the department.</p> <p>Managers, Coordinators, Instructors - provide clarification and/or information on programs, services, activities and initiatives that relate specifically to their business area.</p> <p>Corporate issues and/or provincial/federal matters are the responsibility of the President.</p>

Staff who respond to media inquiries are requested to provide the following information to Marketing by email or phone message:

- Reporters name and who they work for
- Contact number
- Their deadline
- Date and time the story is scheduled to run
- The topic of the interview.

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Guidelines for staff when responding to media:

- Return media contact within a half-day in order to assist media persons with their deadlines. If you are not available, assign an alternate employee to handle any media enquiries.
- Clarify any question before responding. If you do not know the answer to a question, or feel uncomfortable responding, take the reporter's name and contact information and advise him/her that someone with that information will contact him/her as soon as possible.
- Provide your phone number and email address for any follow-up questions.
- Notify Marketing by email or phone of media contact as above, stating the name of media outlet and the date and time that the story is scheduled to run.

4. *Advice and Training*

All members and officers who are expected to deal with the media will receive training. The Marketing Coordinator will arrange a suitable training course.

All new employees should be made aware of this policy and how it affects them through an orientation and discussion with Marketing.

Advice on all aspects of media relations and publicity is available from the Marketing Team who can provide preparation assistance on media interview techniques.

**Related Documents**

Identity Guide

Social Media Guidelines

Election Guidelines & FAQ