

Cisco College Publication and Media Relations Guidelines

Introduction

Communication is essential to achieving Cisco College's vision. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information to stakeholders and the community at large about Cisco College events and happenings. Cisco College strives to uphold a high reputation and establish a system of transparency, public participation and collaboration. Timely, reliable and accurate communication is an integral part of achieving transparency.

Cisco College Mission

The Mission of Cisco College is to provide quality, affordable, educational opportunities to meet the diverse academic, technical and career needs of the students and communities we serve.

Mission and Vision Goals

- 1. Offer Life-Long Learning Opportunities:** Offer high-quality, life-long learning opportunities in academic transfer programs, career and technical programs, continuing workforce development, developmental college-preparatory course work, faculty and staff development, and personal enrichment.
- 2. Focus on Students:** Focus on students through caring and responsive faculty and staff and through support services that promote access, opportunity and student success.
- 3. Provide a Life-Long Learning Environment:** Provide an environment with appropriate facilities, resources, and staffing that support the life-long learning mission of the college.
- 4. Enhance Quality of Life:** Initiate programs, activities and opportunities that enhance quality of life, encourage tolerance for diversity, engage in the service of others, and partner with the community to meet various educational needs.

Ethics and Philosophy

At Cisco College, ethical standards and a commitment to excellence are the foundations for creating an environment of life-long learning. The college is committed to fulfilling its mission by providing a positive, encouraging and success-oriented environment. All members of the college community are encouraged to act with mutual respect, integrity and professionalism towards one another and when representing the college to the greater community.

College policies that support innovation, sponsor collaboration, maintain open communication, encourage students and employees to adapt to change, call for efficient and effective use of college resources, and promote and protect the rights of each individual in the college community are enforced. This includes freedom from harassment and freedom for students and employees to develop and learn. Cisco College adheres to both state and federal regulations and policies and accepts its responsibilities to students, employees, and the taxpaying citizens of Texas. The college strives to meet these responsibilities with fairness, accountability and integrity.

Guiding Principles

The principles that guide our expectations of learning and working together at Cisco College reflect our values as a community of learners and educators. The college's commitment to ethical standards is demonstrated through these principles.

Learning

We believe an emphasis on teaching and learning should be the guiding force behind everything we do at Cisco College.

Respect

We respect and value each and every student and employee as a unique individual making an important contribution to the College.

Integrity

We work and interact with honesty, integrity, and mutual trust—looking beyond self-interests and without hidden agendas.

Communication

We listen carefully and communicate respectfully, giving genuine consideration to multiple perspectives and diversity of thought.

Cooperation

We work together to achieve common goals, offering support and building consensus.

Joy

We encourage fun and laughter, taking joy in our work and our learning while celebrating our successes.

Innovation

Always striving to improve, we encourage innovation and risk taking without the fear of consequences for unsuccessful endeavors.

Communication is a key component in achieving the Cisco College Mission and Vision. The Comprehensive Communication Plan is an evolving document, which outlines objectives and tactics needed to effectively facilitate an exchange of information between Cisco College, students, prospective students, faculty, staff, families and community stakeholders. Cisco College is a comprehensive public community college district receiving federal, state, and local district support.

Cisco College Image

Cisco College strives to establish and maintain a positive image and identity. The organization embraces the college image by providing management and education tools for staff. The Marketing and Public Relations Department is responsible for administering the Cisco College Style Guide, which ensure the college's brand is used appropriately and consistently across all communications platforms.

Communication Consistency

It is essential to communicate both internally and externally in a timely, reliable and accurate manner.

Internal Communication System

Information disseminated to the media and the public must originate from subject matter experts; when necessary subject matter experts may speak with the media. The Cisco College Information Experts document outlines the primary and alternate staff needed for information dissemination.

Below is a list of key college personnel and subject matter experts. An additional document is included in the CPC that contains contact information for the listed personnel.

Media Relations

Cisco College desires to maintain consistent communication with the public through various information outlets, marketing tools and positive media relations. To ensure the college policies and programs are clearly and consistently communicated to the media, all media relations on behalf of Cisco College are coordinated through the Director of Marketing and Public Relations. However, given the nature of your positions,

department heads and managers may at times receive interview requests directly from the media.

Department heads should recognize that the news media are an important link between the college and the public. Therefore the college must establish a professional working relationship to help maintain a well-informed community.

- If approached or contacted by the local media, please inform the Director of Marketing and Public Relations about your interview.
- The President or Director of Marketing and Public Relations are the official spokespersons for all college related issues. The President may designate management staff to speak on his behalf.
- All college press releases should be routed through the Director of Marketing and Public Relations for distribution. The director is responsible for maintaining an accurate contact list for all local media outlets. In order to ensure all media outlets are treated fairly, new releases should be submitted to the Director of Marketing and Public Relations for review and distribution.
- When submitting press releases, please pay attention to news deadlines. Ideally all information should be submitted at least ONE WEEK prior to desired release. See below for additional information.

Remember to...

1. Call the Director of Marketing and Public Relations.
2. Prepare for an interview. You don't have to talk to the media at the very moment a request is made. It's ok to say, "I'm not able to talk at this moment, but let's set up a time to talk about this."
3. Keep your answers short and simple. The average sound-bite is 5 to 15 seconds. In most cases, that is what will be used on radio and TV. Even print reporters use one or two sentence quotes.
4. Focus on 2 to 3 talking points. Know the subject of an interview in advance and why the reporter wants to interview you. They may not provide a full list of questions to your prior to the interview – but they should provide the topic. Know the main points that YOU want to communicate. Continually reinforce these points during the interview by bridging the conversation back to your main points.
5. Tell the truth.
6. Listen to the reporter's question before responding.
7. Pause and think before you answer.

8. It's best to say "I don't know" if you genuinely don't know the answer or are unsure of the accuracy. Follow up by saying you will find out or who might have the information.
9. Check your appearance.
10. Pay attention to news deadlines by quickly responding to media requests.

Things to avoid...

1. Don't lie – EVER!
2. Do not go "off the record." While many members of the media have very high levels of integrity and ethics, do not trust that something will stay off the record. One bad experience can be catastrophic. Remember, words that are not said, cannot be quoted.
3. Do not say "No Comment." Instead say something like, "I am not able to comment on a pending lawsuit."
4. Don't say anything you wouldn't want on the evening news or the front page. Comments can be taken out of context or cause problems. Be especially cautious about humor, sardonic asides, sarcasm or word play. It is never appropriate to use personal slurs or swear words when talking to the media.
5. Don't speculate, offer personal opinions, or speak beyond your expertise. Questions about third parties should be referred to the third party. Also beware of questions that begin with "What if..." It's all right to respond, "I prefer not to speculate."
6. Don't use jargon. Keep it simple.
7. Don't play favorites.
8. Don't ignore media calls. If you don't have time to respond to an inquiry – refer them to the Director of Marketing and Public Relations.
9. Don't become angry or provoked. Always be polite and remain calm. Even if a reporter is hostile, remain calm and in control.
10. Do not disclose confidential information. Refer questions about confidential information to the President's Office. Examples include: certain personnel records, medical records, pending employee discipline, pending litigation, certain law enforcement records and student records.

Publication Request

Local media dictate a strict publication schedule, which results in the need to promote and announce upcoming projects and events in a timely fashion. Outlined below is a schedule for information submissions, which ensures your information will be released to the public and the media in a timely fashion.

News Releases

One of the best ways to inform the public is to send out a news/press release. A news release is a document, typically an email that is distributed to all the local media. The goal is to have the media release the information via their channels and outlets. The media tends to have a greater following of viewers, readers and even social media users. All news releases are also disseminated to the college's email list serves and social media sites.

1 WEEK IN ADVANCE

If you wish to submit information that needs to be released to the press, please submit the information to the Office of Marketing and Public Relations at least one week in advance. Not all publications run on the same schedule. For example the Abilene Reporter News is published daily whereas the Eastland County News is published once a week on Thursdays, therefore to be included in their weekly publication information must be released either the Friday or Monday before. Layout and design typically take place on Tuesday and printing will occur on Wednesday.

Social Media

Currently the college utilizes various social media platforms to help inform the public. All news releases and relevant content are posted to social media platforms. Creating content for social media is very important, so please share any and all ideas with the Office for Marketing and Public Relations. A copy of the college's Social Media Policy is also included in the CPC.

The Sooner the Better

As a rule of thumb, content for social media needs to be sent out in the moment.

Questions, Comments or Concerns?

If you are ever unsure, just ask! All information needs to be routed through the Office of Marketing and Public Relations.

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