Reminder of UTSW Communications Policies and Guidelines

As UT Southwestern continues to elevate its reputation as a leading academic medical center with multiple audiences and stakeholders, it is increasingly important that all faculty, staff, and students adhere to established policies and guidelines related to engaging the news media, communicating with public officials, and participating in social media platforms.

Media Inquiries

All media requests – including those from our affiliated hospitals or their communications offices, including Parkland, Children’s Medical Center, Texas Health Resources, and the North Texas VA – must first be coordinated and vetted through the UT Southwestern Office of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs (CMPA). This is in keeping with UT Southwestern’s Communication with the Media policy, which requires administration, faculty, staff, and students to refrain from responding to a media request, unless specifically authorized by the President or the President’s designee to do so.

Before responding or agreeing to an interview request when contacted by the media or communications staff from an affiliated hospital, forward the request to CMPA by calling or referring callers to 214-648-3404 (available 24 hours a day) or by emailing the request to news@utsouthwestern.edu.

These include requests:
- Directly from media outlets including TV, newspapers, magazines, blogs, or social media avenues;
- Indirectly from other public relations offices at our affiliated hospitals for interviews or press releases;
- Indirectly from companies or agencies involved in clinical trials or medical devices regarding press releases.

This policy does not cover academic work such as peer-reviewed publications, unless you have been contacted by a journal’s public relations officer or wish to highlight your accomplishments through UT Southwestern’s public relations avenues. This policy also is not intended to limit or proscribe the right of individuals associated with UT Southwestern to voice their personal opinions. However, when doing so, it is essential that individuals avoid giving the impression that they are speaking for UT Southwestern, since only the President or the President’s designee is authorized to make statements on behalf of the institution.

Communication with Public Officials

The President has designated the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy as the primary source of interaction with government officials and agencies. If asked by a public official or government agency to provide institutional information or sworn testimony related to your role at UT Southwestern, you should immediately inform the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs, which will coordinate and oversee any response. In addition, if you wish to contact a legislative office, public official, or public agency regarding any UT Southwestern program or activity, before any contact is made, you must inform the Office for Government Affairs and Policy for approval.
Nonetheless, many opportunities present themselves for members of the UT Southwestern community to testify before government bodies or to write letters of opinion to public officials and agencies as private citizens; indeed, it is desirable and proper for members of the UT Southwestern community to be engaged citizens. However, when doing so, it is essential that you avoid giving the impression that you are speaking for UT Southwestern, since only the President or the President’s designee is authorized to make statements on behalf of the institution.

For further guidance, please review the Communication with Public Officials and Government Agencies policy, or contact the Office for Government Affairs and Policy at 214-648-3684.

Social Media

Before engaging in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., please make yourself aware of several policies that may apply to your personal and professional activity by referring to UT Southwestern’s Social Media Guidelines, which were developed with the involvement of CMPA, Compliance, Legal Affairs, and Information Security.

For example, UT Southwestern’s Prohibition Against Political Aid and Legislative Influence policy states that UT Southwestern must comply with all Texas laws regarding political activities by public entities and individuals. In accordance with such laws, UT Southwestern may not use state funds or property to influence the outcome of any election, to promote the passage or defeat of any legislative measure, or to participate in any political activity or campaign. Nonetheless, individuals affiliated with UT Southwestern may, as private citizens, on their own time and without using state resources, participate in lobbying or other political activities.

Even in instances where you are engaging in personal social media activity, however, you should maintain professional boundaries and be aware that any comments could reflect upon UT Southwestern. As with engaging the news media, it is essential that individuals avoid giving the impression that they are speaking for UT Southwestern.

These policies and guidelines are in place to protect the institution and to ensure that we are compliant with applicable laws. Thank you for your continued support and involvement as we further elevate awareness of our accomplishments.