


AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Policy Number: 99:027	Supersedes Policy Number: None
Date: September 7, 2000	Dated: None
Subject: Media (With Regard to Campus Emergencies and Crisis Situations)	
Initiating Authority: Vice President for Univ. Advancement	TBR Policy/Guideline Reference:
Approved:  9/24/00 President	

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for APSU faculty and staff regarding media access and release of information during crisis or emergency situations involving the APSU community. The guidelines particularly address circumstances requiring the release of information about individuals (APSU students and employees) so as to ensure compliance with FERPA (Family Educational Right to Privacy) and to respond, accurately and completely, to press inquiries during and after crisis situations at or about APSU.

POLICY

While it is the philosophy of APSU to be as open and informative as possible, providing all relevant information that does not violate our obligation to protect student privacy or that of faculty and staff, we are an educational institution and our first order of business is to provide those educational services with as little disruption as possible. Therefore, it is Austin Peay State University's policy that, in certain crisis or emergency situations, media requests for access to the University (including students, faculty, staff) be referred to the Public Relations and Publications Office. Staff in the office will assess each request and advise the media on steps to take for access to campus information. This policy does not apply to normal media requests for information from a faculty member about matters in his/her field, and is in no way designed to limit one's civil liberty or academic freedom.

GUIDELINES

Breaking News/Crisis Situations: If a situation exists where a major news story or a potential situation or widespread public interest about APSU arises, please contact:

Director of Public Relations/Publications (931) 221-7459
Assistant Director of Public Relations/Publications (931) 221-7459, or
Vice President for Student Affairs (931) 221-7341 or other appropriate Vice President

Once notified, staff in the Public Relations and Publications Office (in collaboration with the appropriate Vice President and President) will designate the University spokesperson who will serve as the official news source.

1. **Release of Information:** If a student or family member is involved in the situation, the Office of Public Relations and Publications, along with the Vice President or Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, will secure proper permission before releasing any information about the student, other than information already available to the public. It is the policy of APSU not to release any opinions and/or statements about the student's grades, behavior or other personal information without the permission of the student.
2. **Substantiation of Facts:** Staff in the Office of Public Relations and Publications, together with the primary contacts listed above, will begin a rapid process to evaluate the circumstances of each story. Other APSU personnel will be involved, when appropriate.
3. **Communication with the Media:** An official representative on the issue in question may be asked to work with appropriate University staff and the news media. This person will be responsible for providing timely, accurate information about the situation. Each spokesperson should work closely with the Office of Public Relations and Publications, the designated Vice President and others to assure everyone is disseminating the same information.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

During Breaking News, Emergency, or Crisis Situations:
If anyone at the University is contacted by the media, please contact the Office of Public Relations and Publications immediately at 7459. If the inquiry is after business hours (and it cannot

wait until regular work hours), you may telephone the Director or Assistant Director of Public Relations/Publications at home.

It is best to be armed with all facts before talking with a reporter. Although you may be involved directly in an incident or issue, you may not be aware of all the facts or of laws involving right-to-privacy, etc. Thus, if you are contacted by the media with reference to campus emergencies, etc., please notify the Public Relations and Publications Office regarding how or if to respond.

Please remember to tell the reporter, courteously, that you (or someone else at the University) will get back in touch as quickly as possible. Although we do not want to give any impression of withholding information intentionally, we must follow procedures to verify fact so as to provide accurate responses and protect the rights of individuals.

*Media Access to All Areas of APSU Campus During Emergency, Crisis Situations: When media (including broadcast media) want to enter any area of APSU to interview, film or photograph on campus, the Office of Public Relations and Publications should be contacted.

With necessary consultation, staff in this office will make arrangements for media representatives to have access to the appropriate locations or individuals. This ensures the media has access without disturbing classes or other on-campus activities.

If an interview or information on students is requested, staff in the Office of Public Relations and Publications first must obtain their consent, which may require going through the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. We ask the media to allow adequate time for University officials to comply with their requests.

Please refer unescorted media representatives on campus to the Public Relations and Publications Office immediately (7459).

Media may film outside and should be permitted to do so as long as they don't obstruct traffic or parking or disturb campus activities.

Be as open and informative as possible, providing all relevant information that does not violate our obligation to protect student privacy or that of APSU personnel.

If you have any questions about these procedures, telephone the Director or Assistant Director of Public Relations/Publications Office at (931) 221-7459.