UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Media Relations & Social Media
Policies & Procedures

Updated June 2024

About University Communications

University Communications in the Office for Marketing & Public Relations (MPR) manages the university's media relations and social media and is the official source of information about the University of Mobile.

University Communications works with local, state, regional, national and international media to promote the mission of the university by:

- Informing the public through collaboration and partnership

- Promoting the university's achievements, activities and events of significance

- Expanding the general visibility of the university

- Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public.

SECTION I: MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

A.Introduction   This policy applies to all University of Mobile employees, faculty, staff, students, trustees and university subsidiaries regarding interacting with news media representatives. News media refers to representatives of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online publications and media, documentary and video producers, television and radio, etc.

B. General Policy

1. **The Associate Vice President for University Communications serves as the official university spokesperson, in conjunction with the President and Vice Presidents. Media requesting information, access to campus or coverage of the university, its personnel or students, should first be directed to University Communications for assistance. Media on campus must be accompanied by a University Communications representative or, for coverage of university sports, an Athletics Communications representative.**

University employees who are contacted by the media should always consult with University Communications before agreeing to an interview or to provide information if the inquiry is related to university matters or may reflect upon the university.

Members of the faculty are encouraged to provide comments to the news media regarding their research, scholarship, teaching or professional expertise. Faculty and staff whose expertise can provide context to current news and world events are encouraged to contact

University Communications as such news events are occurring, so the communications team may coordinate media interviews that bring positive attention to university faculty, staff and programs.

Since positive media solicitation is an integral element of the university communications program, any ideas for articles or coverage that would positively portray the university, its work or its community should be directed to University Communications. In a similar manner, University Communications should be notified about negative occurrences that are likely to rise to the level of a news story.

University Communications is available to :
- screen calls from journalists
- return a reporter's phone call on behalf of faculty/staff
- serve as an intermediary to gain information on a reporter's story topic, angle and questions
- prepare faculty/staff for a media interview.

2. The Office for Marketing and Public Relations is the designated office on campus permitted to send out news releases and obtain news media coverage on behalf of the university and its administrative and academic units. Athletics press releases are coordinated by the Athletics Communications Office.

The university maintains a professional, journalistic communication style in news releases and ensures a review policy that allows for a consistent, appropriate public image for the University of Mobile while providing the opportunity to integrate key marketing information into the university's media messages.

University Communications has access to numerous news media contacts and will work with faculty, staff and students to coordinate publicity or visibility for programs, events or newsworthy issues. Employees, faculty, students, colleges, schools or departments that seek to generate external media publicity/coverage for university-related programs, events or achievements must first contact University Communications. It is the responsibility of each college dean/department head to implement procedures to comply with this policy.

Requests for external media publicity/coverage may be made online via the marketing request form at umobile.edu/marketing.

University Communications will assess the subject of each request and determine how to proceed based on whether or not it:

* Is in keeping with the university's mission
* Is "newsworthy" enough to appeal to the news media or other intended audiences
* Will produce the desired results
* Will help meet university communications and marketing goals.

NOTE: The University of Mobile complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding the mention and release of personal and/or educational records of all current employees and students, and complies with all privacy and security laws included FERPA.

C. Guidelines for News Media on Campus

The University of Mobile has an excellent relationship with news media based on our reputation for accuracy, ability to anticipate and provide the ingredients for an interesting and complete story, decades of success in meeting reporters' deadlines, and respect for the SPJ Code of Ethics that journalists follow to: Seek Truth and Report It, Minimize Harm, Act Independently, and Be Accountable and Transparent.

Guidelines for news media:

- **The University of Mobile requires that all news media obtain permission from the   Office for Marketing & Public Relations (University Communications) before arriving on university property to cover a story or conduct an interview.** This includes instances where news media have been invited to campus by students, faculty, staff or others. If advance permission has not been obtained, news media may be required to conduct their interview off campus.

- **News Media Contact:** Kathy Dean, Associate Vice President for University Communications, 251.442.2215 (office), 251.604.7592 (cell) or kdean@umobile.edu.

- **Athletic Communications Contact:** David Haney, Sports Information Director, 251.442.2264 or dhaney@umobile.edu.

- **All visitors to campus, including news media, must stop at the campus entrance and sign in at the gatehouse.**

- **All news media on university property must be accompanied by a University Communications representative or Athletic Communications representative.**

- **In the event of an emergency, or to limit disruptions to normal university operations, news media may be restricted to certain areas of campus for filming or live broadcasting.**

D. University Photography
The University of Mobile reserves the right to photograph members of the university community

including, but not limited to, its students, faculty and staff, in situations appropriate to the image of an academic institution, and to publish likenesses in University of Mobile publications, video, websites, the news media, social media or other recruitment or promotional materials. Anyone wishing to be excluded from university photography must notify the Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations in writing with an accompanying photograph at marketing@umobile.edu.

E. Filming/Photography on Campus by Non-News Entities
Still or video images of campus features may not be used for commercial or promotional purposes outside of scheduled news coverage without approval from the Office for Marketing & Public Relations. The campus may not be used as a location for professional photography such as wedding photography.

Professional staff, faculty, students, colleges, schools or departments that are contacted by external production companies with requests to film on university leased or owned property must first contact the Office for Marketing & Public Relations with this request. Permission from the Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations is required for any kind of filming on university leased or owned property.

Producers who wish to film on campus must submit in writing detailed information about the proposed project in order for Marketing & Public Relations to make a determination as to the permissibility of the filming, including:
- Detailed description of the overall project
- Detailed description of the type of activity proposed to be filmed at the university
- A script for the project
- Locations at the university requested
- Date and time of proposed filming
- Length of proposed filming
- Number of people involved in each day's filming
- Any other information reasonably requested by the university in order to make a determination as to permissibility of the proposed filming.

No acknowledgement or recognition may be given to the university in the project unless specifically reviewed and approved by the Office for Marketing & Public Relations. The university's seal, logo, trademarks, and service marks may not be used without the written permission of Marketing & Public Relations. Written permission is also required for the use of university-branded clothing and other items, such as pennants, for use as costumes and on sets.

SECTION II: Social Media Policy

Purpose

The University of Mobile understands that social media may be used to further the university's mission and Christ-centered values by providing channels of interaction and engagement between the university and students, parents, faculty, employees, alumni, fans, media, the surrounding
community, potential students and donors, etc. The university supports this kind of participation in social media and is committed to academic freedom in these channels.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the use of social media by institutional users while assuring that usage is in line with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to provide   protection to the university's reputation and other members of its community. While this policy primarily focuses on social media accounts that are university-owned and university-controlled, it will also provide general guidelines regarding faculty and staff personal use.

The Office for Marketing & Public Relations has developed these account requirements to assist the university community in the safe, legal and effective use of social media and to protect users' personal and professional reputations and the reputation of the university.

Any social media accounts featuring the name of the University of Mobile or any of our schools, teams or programs are subject to the requirements outlined here. Existing accounts will be
periodically reviewed to ensure that they adhere to these requirements. Inactive accounts, or accounts that do not adhere to the guidelines will be closed.

Because social media evolves constantly, these guidelines are subject to ongoing review and updates.

University of Mobile-affiliated Account Requirements

   1. All official social media accounts featuring the name University of Mobile, a university mark or any of our schools, teams or programs must submit all login information to the Office for Marketing and Public Relations. Submit to to Baleigh Essary, Content Creator, at bessary@umobile.edu

2. Employees or those requesting new accounts that will feature the university's name or official logo must demonstrate a significant need to communicate outside of the primary accounts. Request for new accounts can be submitted to Baleigh Essary, Content Creator, at bessary@umobile.edu

3. University-related accounts must be managed by a university employee. Administrative access will be terminated upon the employee's termination, voluntary leave or assignment to another job.

4. All accounts must be linked to a university email account, rather than a personal account. (ex: jdoe@umobile.edu rather than jdoe@gmail.com)

5. A strategy meeting with the social media manager is required prior to creating a new   account or transitioning the management of an existing account to a new account manager.

6. The Office for Marketing & PR must have administrative access to ALL accounts associated with the University of Mobile. The Sports Information Director must have administrative   access to ALL accounts associated with University of Mobile athletics.

7. All university of Mobile-affiliated social media accounts must follow the approved account naming structure:

      a. On Facebook, University of Mobile must be at the beginning of the page name. (ex: University of Mobile – Alabama School of the Arts)

      b. On Instagram and Twitter, your handles should match. (ie: @umobilerams) The display name should include University of Mobile if the character limit allows. If the character limit restricts you, please use UMobile. (ie: UMobile College of Health Professions)

      c. When creating an account handle, do not use "UofM[Department]."

      d. The "about" or "bio" section of your account must include "The official account of University of Mobile's…."

      e. Content on all owned social media accounts must follow the University of Mobile Brand Standards.

Important Information

• Accounts should be regularly monitored, and engagement should be addressed in a timely manner, which includes oversight throughout the weekend and after business hours. Please respond to any engagement within 24 hours.

- If there are any negative or controversial comments made on an account, YOU MUST contact your Vice President and the Office for Marketing & Public Relations (marketing@umobile.edu or kdean@umobile.edu) prior to responding.
- Under NO circumstance should you delete or hide a comment until you have notified the Office for Marketing and Public Relations.
- **Comment Removal Disclaimer:** For the safety and well-being of our online UM community, we monitor all comments and responses. We will remove anything—across all channels—that does not adhere to our community values. Learn more: umo-bile.edu/mission.

Crisis Management
- In the event of a crisis or campus emergency, account managers must adhere to the university communication protocol. Messaging during a crisis will first be communicated from the university flagship accounts. If necessary, you may reshare or repost the original message from the flagship accounts.
- In the event of a crisis, ALL pre-scheduled messages MUST halt.
- Do not craft your own response or message relating to a crisis or campus emergency. ONLY use approved messages from the Office for Marketing & PR.

Style Guide
1. **Social Media Voice – Who we are:** We are higher education for a higher purpose. We are Christ-centered, academically-focused, student-devoted and distinctively-driven
2. **Ownership of Post:** All messages posted on all central media platforms are posted in the character of the university and its departments. We do not attach names or initials to post, only private messages.
3. **Positivity and Transparency:** We present our messages with a positive attitude but are   honest and transparent in the information we share.
4. **For times, use am and pm (lowercase, no periods).**
5. **Write out full words for days of the week (Monday, Tuesday)**
6. **Words we do not use: -** Dorms (instead use "residence halls"), UMobile (instead use UM)

Network-Specific Guidelines
Twitter
- Replace "and" with an ampersand (&)

- Include any relevant mentions (@Fox10News)
- Retweet or quote tweets
- Include the university hashtag #BeKnownUM

Facebook
- Use line breaks to format post to be more readable
- Include any relevant mentions (@Fox10News:)
- When linking an article, delete the text URL from your post and display the link as a preview

Instagram
- Avoid posting links in post. If needed, include link in bio.
- To create space between paragraphs in Instagram captions, hit enter after the final character on the line, without hitting space. For example: Complete the line of text.[Enter]
- Use #BeKnownUM with each post
- Video can be no longer than 1 minute unless posting to IGTV
- No more than 4 photos per post

TikTok

TikTok is meant for a lighthearted look at the University of Mobile's campus, students, and culture. It's a great way to connect with current and potential students.
- Account needs to be a "Creator Account"
- Always include #BeKnownUM as well as other hashtags
- Video length 15-60 seconds
- No use of songs with profanity or inappropriate language
- No use of inappropriate gestures
- Must have appropriate clothing
- No controversial topics, political topics, or "truth bombing"
- Caption must be less than 150 characters (preferably less)
- The TikTok account must be kept up to date with at least one post per month

Best Practices for Official University of Mobile Social Media Accounts

1. **Fill out your profile completely.** Users may visit your Facebook page or Twitter profile before   visiting your website. Make sure all the information in your profile is accurate and up to date. Include as much information as you can fit, the most important being your website, telephone number, and a concise description of your department.

2. Build your fan base. As you start to engage with the right individuals and organizations, you naturally begin to build your fan base — it's the organic way of doing things on the social Web. In addition to that, once you've developed a solid presence, part of your fan-, friend-, and   follower growth strategy should include promoting your presence on Social media sites to your current supporter base. You can do this by putting social-media links on your main website and sending email communications to your house file, letting all your supporters know where to find you on the various social-networking sites you participate on.

3. Listen to your fans. Social media provides a great way to listen to what people are saying about your brand. Monitor your Facebook page and Twitter mentions constantly but spend some time searching for what people are saying outside of your pages. Your department may not have the budget to invest in a robust social media monitoring tool, but there are plenty of free monitoring and listening tools available to you: Hootsuite, Buffer or Sprout.

4. Create meaningful relationships. Although it's extremely important to listen to your fans, don't just listen - talk back and engage with them. If a person is asking a question, provide them with an answer in a timely manner. If they are complimenting you, thank them. If they are   complaining about you, find ways to resolve the situation for them. Take the conversation offline and private message. Social media allows you to build a relationship with your fans, but you must be willing to engage with them.

5. Share useful information and content. Think of participating on Social media like you think about your website. Would people come back if you failed to update your website with useful information on a regular basis? Doubtful. The same holds true on Social media, so make sure to consistently share great content that's relevant and useful to your fan base. The key is that you become valuable by sharing useful content.

6. Be timely. Social media operates on an immediate schedule. Resolving issues in a timely, reliable manner is a fundamental part of excellent customer support. Don't wait days before answering or responding to posts on your wall or tweets. If you're un-sure of the answer or have to work some things out before posting an accurate answer, tell the user that you will get back to them as soon as you have an answer.

7. Stay current. Social media is constantly changing, evolving, and growing. Dedicate some time each week to look over websites and blogs to discover what new practices can be adopted in your accounts.

Faculty and Staff Personal Use of Social Media
This section applies to an employee's personal use of social media.

- Use common sense!
- Think first, post second. Be aware of how your interactions on social media may be perceived by others or spark controversy you didn't intend. Before you post, ask: Would I want to see this on the front page of The New York Times? Consider the impact your post may have regarding students, parents, faculty, employees, alumni, fans, media, the   surrounding community, potential students and donors, etc.
- Keep in mind the values and mission of the university when you engage on social media, understanding that the nature of social media blurs the lines between the personal and your professional role as a member of staff or faculty representing the university.   (See umobile.edu/mission.)
- Some questions to ask before you post are:
    1. Will it edify? (Mark 12:29-31, 1 Cor. 14:26)
    2. How could I be misunderstood? (John 13:7, 16:12)
    2. Will it bring about unnecessary and unhelpful controversy? (Titus 3:9)
    3. Will it embarrass or offend? (1 Cor. 12:21-26)
    4. Will it help my evangelism? (Col. 1:28-29)
    5. What do others advise? (Prov. 11:14, 15:22, 24:6)
- You are prohibited from using the University of Mobile's name or image to endorse an opinion, product, cause, business, or political candidate.
- Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others and the university and of university policies regarding those rights.
- Generally, employees should manage their personal social media accounts on their own time. However, it is acknowledged that faculty/staff may choose to use their personal social media accounts in furtherance of their academic endeavors and employment with the   university and this policy is not intended to hinder that option.
- Computers, hardware, information technology accounts, and information technology infrastructure are property owned and operated by the university. As a result, the law does not grant you an expectation of privacy in your usage of them.

Protected Speech

These guidelines are not intended to restrict free speech or the principles of academic freedom. However, the United States Supreme Court has held that public employers generally have   authority to discipline their employees for speech in a number of circumstances, including but not limited to speech that:
- •Leads to inciting or producing imminent violence or other breach of the peace;
- •Implies the speech is aligned with the employee's official duties, but is contrary to the best interests of the employer;
- •Discloses any confidential student information, protected health care information, personnel records, personal financial information, or confidential research data; or
- •Impacts discipline by superiors or productivity among co-workers, has a detrimental impact on close working relationships for which personal loyalty and confidence are necessary,   impedes the performance of the speaker's official duties, interferes with the regular   operation of the employer, or otherwise adversely affects the employer's ability to efficiently provide services.

SECTION III: Crisis Communication Procedures

For the purposes of this plan, a crisis is defined as an event that prompts significant, often sustained, news coverage and public scrutiny and has the potential to damage the institution's reputation, image or financial stability. A crisis could be precipitated by an emergency or a controversy. An emergency is a fire, hurricane, crime or other event that presents a physical threat and typically involves a response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel. A controversy is a situation or issue of a sensitive nature that has the potential to rise to the level of a news story and may impact the reputation of the institution.

The first priority in an emergency is the safety and security of students and university personnel. Seconds matter in a crisis, and we will be judged by how quickly we share information with key audiences. The university recognizes the need for unusually crisp decision-making during a crisis to enable rapid, accurate communication in coordination with the institution's broader process. Prepared messages may be activated quickly and notifications sent through the University of Mobile Alert System by the Office for Student Life. In the event unique messaging is needed, the Office for Marketing & Communications will assist Student Life in developing messaging for the University of Mobile Alert System.

In issues of a sensitive nature that have the potential to rise to the level of news coverage, the Associate Vice President for University Communications will work with the Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations and the Vice Presidents or their designees in impacted areas, in conjunction with the university President, to develop key messages, talking points and university statements.

In all events, the Associate Vice President for University Communications is the official point of contact for media and works with members of the Crisis Management Team to develop clear and concise messaging for various internal and external audiences. Members of the Crisis Management Team either include or are appointed by the President and/or Vice Presidents and may vary depending upon the nature of the crisis.

While each situation is unique, following are general steps regarding communication and media relations that involve members of the Crisis Management Team and Marketing & Public Relations:

Review and write down known facts – those that can and cannot be released to the public — and determine whether a response is needed, and if that response is needed for all of the university's key audiences. These facts will be used for news releases, text messages, website and social media posts, and other key messages to various constituents.

Develop several key messages that will be included in all university communications. One message typically will address what the university is doing to ensure the safety of students and other community members. Another may need to be forward-looking and address what we are doing to make sure the crisis, or a problem with our response, doesn't happen again. All of the messages should evolve as circumstances change but will always aim to restore and maintain confidence and calm, balancing a sense of concern with resolve and action.

Determine who will act as spokespeople. Depending upon the circumstances, a senior leader of the university may need to participate with the Associate Vice President for University Communications as spokesperson for the university. In a time of emergency, it is critical for a high-ranking leader of the university – in most cases, the President or a Vice President – to be the university's public face and take the lead in communicating key messages and answering questions. Such action illustrates that the situation is under control and efforts are being made to address any questions that have arisen. As the situation evolves, the senior leader acting as the key spokesperson may change.

Manage communications with news media. In consultation with the Crisis Management Team, Marketing & Public Relations will determine the best method of communication throughout

various stages, including press conference, media advisory, press release, designating a media staging area off campus, etc.

Our guiding principle will be to communicate facts as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change, to ensure the safety of the university community and the continued operation of essential services. How we communicate in an emergency or a crisis will affect public perceptions of the university. Honesty and speed are the most effective means to avoid lasting damage to the institution and widespread second-guessing by the public, which expects immediate access to accurate information. At the same time, we realize that in a crisis, people will likely expect us to have more information than we may actually have. That makes it imperative to speak with accuracy about what we know and not to speculate about details we do not know.

Assign responsibilities to the Crisis Management Team to communicate the facts of the situation and our response to key audiences. We will use multiple mediums to reach as many people as possible with accurate, timely information. This is especially important in the first hours and days of an emergency or a crisis. Our goal is to be open, accountable and accessible to all audiences, while also being mindful of legal and privacy concerns.

Each member will use approved messages and templates for this effort. Whenever possible, the first groups that should be informed about a crisis are internal audiences directly affected, such as students, employees, faculty and trustees. The next groups typically would include parents, alumni, community leaders and other audiences, as well as the media.The channels used to communicate to each audience may differ. Among the channels are the University of Mobile Alert System, university website, social media such as the university Facebook, university email, news media, etc.

Develop communications from the president, as appropriate. It may be necessary for the president to communicate to the university community about the emergency. The Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations and the Associate Vice President for University Communications will work with the President in developing presidential communications, including correspondence, e-mail messages, talking points, speeches, etc., in consultation with the appropriate members of the Crisis Team.