

The College of The Bahamas



Established 1974

POLICY NUMBER	2011-06-POL
TITLE OF THE POLICY	Communications Policy (revised)
DATE OF ADOPTION	November 9 th , 2011
COUNCIL RESOLUTION NUMBER	2011-06-POL
SUPERSEDES	January 14th, 2009 Communications Policy
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION	November 9 th , 2011
PROJECTED DATE OF REVISION	September 2013
PURPOSE OF THE POLICY	To ensure The College's ability to communicate and deliver institutional messages consistently and accurately; that communications representing The College are of high quality; and are presented in a manner that is both appropriate and effective, and that best serves The College's image, mission and strategic goals.
REVISION NUMBER	1st
ACCOUNTABILITY	Associate Vice President (AVP), External Affairs
ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES	Determined by AVP, External Affairs
RELATED POLICIES	Emergency Response Management Policy
HISTORY	1 st Revision

1. Authority

The College of The Bahamas Act assigns the power to the Council to “to provide for the welfare of the students of the College; to control and superintend the property and policies of the College and to fix fees and charges for courses of study, facilities and other services provided by the College and to reduce, waive or refund fees and charges so fixed, generally or in any particular case or class of case”.¹

2. Scope

This policy covers all publications and collateral marketing materials, official College of The Bahamas communications and use of The College’s brand identity, media relations, campus signage, advertising, electronic and crisis communications.

3. General Publication Guidelines

3.1 Communications meeting all of the following criteria must have approval from the AVP, External Affairs or designee:

- a. Bear the name or any part of The College of The Bahamas brand identity
- b. Are to be paid for with College funds
- c. Are intended for external (off campus) distribution

3.2 Section 3.1 includes:

- a. Publications, including those requiring no or partial editorial or design services, reprints or revisions of previously produced publications; publications produced by means of desktop publishing; and initial formats and editorial style for newsletters directed toward off-campus audiences.
- b. Print and broadcast advertising
- c. Photographs, video and audio productions used individually to represent The College to a mass audience or in any materials covered by this policy.
- d. Non-commercial use of any official symbol of The College, including seals, logo or signature, on all materials, whether or not they are paid for with College funds, must be approved, unless the materials are intended only for internal (on-campus) distribution. Non-College entities that wish to use the institution’s name or symbol for commercial use must obtain College approval.
- e. Deviations from standard College of The Bahamas letterhead or business card design. Letterhead and business cards representing The College must be approved regardless of where they are printed or who pays for them.

3.3 Section 3.1 does not include:

- a. Materials produced primarily for classroom or educational use.
- b. Materials produced for scholarly publications and presentations.
- c. Advertisements of positions
- d. Materials intended only for internal (on-campus) distribution
- e. Material produced by student organizations (unless it bears The College’s logo)
- f. Routine forms
- g. Correspondence

3.4 This policy is not intended to limit the ability of campus constituents to produce their own materials, but to encourage the use of services available through the Office of Communication. The Office offers writing, editorial, design and other creative services as well as strategic marketing and media planning services. When offices, department, faculties, schools and other constituents of The College community elect to produce materials covered by this policy on their own, final approval from the AVP, External Affairs or designee is required before the material can be distributed.

1 (Article 8. of The College of The Bahamas Act, 1995)

4. The College Logo

4.1 Use of The College Logo

- 4.1.1 The College logo is the institution's single most important visual identification. The visual elements of the logo, logotype and signatures are specifically configured, with each element placed, sized and rendered in precise relationship to the others to create a unique visual character. It should not be altered in any way, other than proportional enlargement or reduction.
- 4.1.2 The addition of elements to the logo is prohibited. This includes, but is not restricted to type, rules, surrounded boxes, shadows, outlines or embellishments.

4.2 Use of Secondary (sub) Logos

- 4.2.1 Consistency in appearance is vital to building and maintaining equity in The College's visual identity. The brand equity for departments, schools and offices rests with their affiliation to The College of The Bahamas. Sub-identities, including logos, wordmarks, typefaces and alternate design elements other than College approved graphic elements, dilute The College's goal of maintaining a common mutually reinforcing image.
- 4.2.2 Secondary (sub) logos shall be based on an endorsed brand approach that is made up of the College logo, a sub-brand descriptor and the sub-brand name. In cases where there is no sub-brand descriptor, only the College logo and sub-brand name shall be used. These components shall be held in a fixed relationship. Modifications of any kind are prohibited. Samples are contained in Schedule B.
- 4.2.3 Sub-brand descriptors for academic units shall include:
 - a. Centre for
 - b. Institute for
 - c. Department of
 - d. School of
 - e. Faculty of
- 4.2.4 Sub-brand descriptors for administrative units shall include:
 - a. Department of
 - b. Office of

- 4.2.5 All secondary brands shall comply with this established format and shall be facilitated through the Office of Communication. Development of logos outside of this branding system is prohibited.

5. Media Relations

- 5.1 The Office of Communication is responsible for coordinating all external communications regarding official College of The Bahamas business with news media. This includes press conferences, press releases and interviews by authorized College representatives whether by telephone, computer, fax transmissions or in person. Individuals, offices and departments must coordinate all proposed communications with the news media regarding official College business through the AVP, External Affairs or designee.
- 5.2 Only the College Council Chairperson and his/her designee, The College President and Senior Administrative Team members are authorized to speak on behalf of The College of The Bahamas. In the case of crisis situations, the list of spokespersons as per The College's Crisis Communications policy will apply.

- 5.3 The Office of Communication must be notified of any intended campus visits by external journalists, photographers, videographers and other media related personnel, and must be apprised of the purpose for such visits. The Office retains the authority to refuse access to any such persons, companies or organizations, if their purposes are deemed inappropriate or potentially harmful to the institution or either of its constituent groups.
- 5.4 The Office of Communication shall notify the Security Department of all expected media visits in advance of those visits. While on campus members of the media shall wear College issued media badges. These badges will be issued by security personnel at campus entrances.
- 5.5 In instances where members of the media attempt to access College campuses without prior notification, security personnel shall immediately contact the Office of Communication. In such instances Office of Communication personnel will advise of appropriate next steps.
- 5.6 While on campus members of the media must be escorted by a member of the Office of Communication, or their designee. Members of the media may attend athletic events without an escort.
- 5.7 Members of the media shall not be permitted in student residences, classrooms, offices or other non-public areas without explicit, pre-arranged permission through the Office of Communication.
- 5.8 Restrictions contained in this section do not apply to College faculty when performing duties of College business.

6. Use of College Stationery and Business Cards

- 6.1 The use of College of The Bahamas Stationery or business cards for purposes other than College business is prohibited. Individuals or offices may not use official College Stationery for communicating personal views, positions or findings to other officials or agencies, or to transmit professional opinions/findings that might give the impression that these opinions/findings reflect the views of The College of The Bahamas.
- 6.2 Use of College of The Bahamas Stationery, business cards other official college trademarks or documents to further an individual's private business interests or to express political or personal viewpoints is expressly forbidden.

7. Campus Signage and Advertising

- 7.1 Official College signage must correctly and appropriately reflect the institution's identity. The AVP, External Affairs or designee will review and approve all permanent and temporary internal and external campus signage. Examples of such signage include building acronyms and other designations placed on the exterior of College buildings, parkway and parking signs, interior directional signs, room designators, temporary signs at construction sites and other areas, and signs hung or displayed in common areas.
- 7.2 The Office of the Vice President with responsibility for grounds and capital development will continue to provide oversight and approval for the placement of signs on College properties. However, such signs are subject to oversight by the AVP, External Affairs or designee and must meet general standards of taste, acceptability and uniformity.

8. Crisis & Emergency Communications Policy

- 8.1 Crisis & Emergency Communications include, although are not limited to, guidance on what may constitute a crisis or an emergency; establishment of a crisis & emergency communications team and a crisis command centre; and guidelines on how to respond to and after a crisis or emergency. The College's Crisis & Emergency Communications policy is established on three fundamental principles:
- a. Concern for the safety and welfare of students, faculty and staff
 - b. The need to respond quickly and accurately, with timely updates as events unfold

- c. The need to effectively communicate a clear and consistent message of The College's handling of the crisis at hand
- 8.2 For the purposes of this policy, a crisis includes but is not limited to an event that prompts news coverage and/or media scrutiny and has the potential to damage the College's reputation, image or financial stability, or disrupts the activities of the College. An emergency includes but is not limited to a fire, hurricane, crime or other event that involves a response from police, fire, emergency medical or other national security force or safety personnel.
- 8.3 Crisis & Emergency Communications are part of The College's overall Emergency Management Response Plan. The Office of Communication will maintain basic templates for news releases and emergency text messages for times of crises/emergencies, so that should such a situation arise, the drafting of appropriate material could be as simple as inserting the relevant facts into the templates.
- 8.4 This policy outlines the roles, responsibilities and protocols that will guide The College in promptly sharing information with all of The College's constituencies, both internal and external, and the general public at large, during an emergency or crisis.
- 8.5 **The Crisis & Emergency Communications Team**
- 8.5.1 The Associate Vice President, External Affairs will be responsible for convening the Crisis & Emergency Communications Team (CECT) [preconditions outlined in the Emergency Management Response Plan]. The Team will be comprised of:
- The President
 - Executive Vice President
 - Vice President Finance/Chief Financial Officer
 - Vice President, Outreach
 - Vice President, Student Affairs
 - Associate Vice President, External Affairs
 - Associate Vice President, Northern Bahamas Campus
 - Dean of Faculty of Liberal & Fine Arts
 - Director, Employee and Industrial Relations
 - Director, Planning
 - Director, Communications
 - Director, Information & Technology
- 8.5.2 The President or his/her designee will add other team members, as may be appropriate in the given circumstances.
- 8.5.3 The CECT will meet in the designated Command Centre.
- 8.5.4 As a matter of standard practice, the CECT shall meet bi-annually, on the first Wednesday of August and February:
- To review the policy to ensure that members remain aware of their responsibilities; and
 - To assess any possible crisis risks
- 8.6. **The Crisis Command Centre**
- 8.6.1 The Crisis Command Centre must be equipped with conference call capabilities, Internet access, back up electric power generation and ready access to bathroom facilities. The Boardroom in the A Block of the main College campus will be the Command Centre. Depending on the nature of the crisis, back up command centres will be (1) the third-floor boardroom of the Michael H. Eldon Complex and (2) a site to be determined by the President or his/her designee.
- 8.6.2 The Crisis Command Centre will also be equipped with all emergency contact information, internal and external, a campus directory, media lists and phone numbers, College of The Bahamas letterhead on CD for press releases, laptop computers for compilation and transmission of press releases to media and other key stake holders, plus for

regular updating of The College's website, and two-way radio capabilities for communication with on campus and external safety and emergency response personnel.

8.6.3 Depending on the nature of the crisis, on-campus shelters or safe houses will be identified.

8.7. **Responding to a Crisis or Emergency**

8.7.1 In the event of an emergency or a crisis, it is imperative that The College take swift action. The goal is to obtain information, confirm its accuracy and disseminate the information as quickly as possible. The CECT's underlying aims must be to communicate facts as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change, to ensure the safety of the College community and the continued operation of essential services.

8.7.2 Based on the circumstances, the CECT may implement the following:

A. Action

1. Designate a secretary who can maintain meeting notes, to-do lists, and information files on the ongoing crisis and other items.
2. Gather the facts. Having accurate information will enable the CECT to properly respond to the crisis.
3. Take immediate action to ensure the safety of students, faculty, staff and nearby residents. If the college community is at risk, immediate action must be taken.
4. Activate all relevant campus safety plans. CECT members will make sure that all applicable safety plans and measures are carried out immediately. Every second counts during a crisis.
5. Develop a plan to assist those who have been affected, e.g., grief counselling, mental health services, support groups, health & safety education awareness, hotline numbers.
6. Employees of the offices designated under External Affairs may be relieved of their typical job responsibilities to help execute crisis & emergency communications activities.

B. Communication

1. **Identify key audiences.** Determine which of The College's stakeholders need to be informed of the situation, and in what order:
 - Students, faculty, staff
 - College Council
 - Parents
 - The media
 - General public
 - AlumniTypically, the first groups that should be informed about a crisis are internal stakeholders directly affected.
2. **Assign responsibilities of communicating to specific audiences to CECT members.** The channels used to communicate to audiences may be different. Designate the responsibility of communicating approved messages to the relevant audiences to appropriate CECT members.
3. **Review facts and determine the following:**
 - What can and cannot be released to the public
 - Whether a response is needed
 - If so, whether response needed for all or select College of The Bahamas stakeholders
4. **Activate a crisis & emergency hotline number.** If The College already has a hotline number, it will be updated to include a specific message or to take calls from concerned parents and students. If no such number already exists, one will be designated for this purpose and publicized.

5. **Develop messages.** The CECT will develop a few clear, simple messages for its stakeholders and the media. These messages will be delivered repeatedly and clearly by one voice. Depending on the crisis, messages can be guided around the following:
 - What The College is doing to ensure the safety of students and other college community members
 - What The College is doing to ensure that the crisis, or a problem with the institution's response to the crisis, does not happen again
 - Messages will evolve as circumstances change, but should always aim to restore and maintain confidence and calm, and should balance a sense of concern with resolve and action.
6. **Designate a spokesperson(s).** It is best to designate a single spokesperson to provide a unified, consistent message to the public. It is critical for a senior leader of The College, in most cases the president, to be the institution's public face and take the lead in communicating key messages and answering questions. This tends to convey to the various publics that the situation is under control and that efforts are being made to address any questions that have arisen. It also serves to calm various audiences. As the situation evolves, the senior leader acting as the key spokesperson may change.
7. **Anticipate tough questions.** The CECT will make a list of all possible tough questions that the media or the public might ask. By composing responses to these questions, the spokesperson can be better prepared for interviews and press briefings.
8. **Identify which media are available to communicate your message.**
9. **Communicate the message and the facts.** Relevant facts will be inserted into the respective media and campus information release templates, and communicated as per the identified media.
10. **Control the message.** The College will stick to the facts and to its main messages, thereby controlling what information is disseminated. This information will be completely truthful and forthcoming. All "bad" news should be told up-front and all at once. Otherwise, it will trickle out slowly and the negative media coverage will continue day after day.
11. **Provide public guidance.** If the crisis involves a health risk, the CECT (and/or relevant designees) will research the risk and offer guidance to the public about symptoms, treatments, and to contact physicians. If the crisis involves a possible evacuation, the CECT will inform the public about areas to be evacuated and time lines for the evacuations. The CECT will also direct the public on where to go for more information, e.g., radio, TV, web sites.
12. **Control the flow of information.** The CECT will control the flow of information by holding a series of press briefings for the media – weekly, daily, or hourly, depending on the nature of the crisis. This would enable The College to operate in a proactive manner, while providing the media with a timetable for when they can expect an update. All CECT members as well as employees of the Office of Communication will be briefed on the situation and informed as to what details they can release. Other College employees who answer phones will be informed of where/where hot to direct media calls. Typically, all media calls will go to the Office of Communication.
13. **Dispel the rumours and do not release personal information.** During the times of crisis, rumours run rampant. If false rumours become prevalent, the spokesperson will need to dispel them publicly. Do not release the names of anyone who is injured or killed until their parents/families have been notified.
14. **Keep track of media calls and requests.** The Director of Communications will keep a list of all of the reporters with whom the spokesperson (and/or designee) speaks. This will enable the Office of Communication to look for news clippings and to later evaluate how the crisis was handled.
15. **Monitor media coverage.** Assigned members of the Office of Communication will monitor media coverage to anticipate any problems in the way information is flowing to the news media. Relevant determinations will be reported to the Crisis Team. It is imperative to know how The College is being

portrayed and to adjust the communications response as needed to limit rumours, correct errors and to maintain confidence in the institution.

16. **Respond to the media quickly and fairly.** The media provide a way for The College to get its message to the public. The media will also shape public opinion about how The College is responding to the crisis. Therefore it is important to cooperate with the media, to be sensitive to media deadlines and to provide all reporters with the same information. Do not give any exclusive stories.

C. After the Crisis, the CECT will do the following:

1. On the basis of ongoing consultations from the Emergency Response Team, determine when the crisis has ended and when routine communications processes may resume.
2. Evaluate how to help the college community recover, return to normal and if needed restore faith/confidence in The College after the trigger event of the crisis is over.
3. Evaluate media coverage of each of The College's actions to help fashion future media strategies.
4. Convene for a debriefing. They will evaluate every action taken and the Crisis & Emergency Communications policy, itself.
5. Follow up with any needed updates and officially recognise the contributions and efforts of internal and external community partners whose help would have been invaluable.

9. Electronic Mail

9.1 An official email address is established and assigned by the Office of Information Technology (OIT), to each registered student, current faculty and staff members. Users are cautioned that electronic communications are not private. They may be viewed and can be monitored. Users are further advised that the official College of The Bahamas email addresses will be used for all electronic College communications. Persons are prohibited from using alternate email addresses when communicating in College capacities.

9.2 The College expects that persons will receive and read email in a timely manner. Individuals are expected to maintain their accounts and check their email daily so that new mail will be properly received and read. In the case of students in particular, failure to receive and read College of The Bahamas communications delivered to his/her official email address in a timely manner does not absolve that student from knowing and complying with the content of such communications.

9.3 While individuals are allowed to redirect email from their official College of The Bahamas email address to another address (e.g. @gmail.com, @hotmail.com, @yahoo.com), they do so at their own risk. The College is not responsible for the handling of email by other service providers. Students in particular should also note that having email redirected does not absolve them from knowing and complying with the content of the communication sent to their official College of The Bahamas email address.

9.4 Improper Use of Electronic Mail

Improper use of the electronic mail system is prohibited. Examples of improper use of the electronic mail system include the following:

- Harassment of others by sending annoying, abusive, profane, threatening, defamatory or offensive messages. Examples: repeated unnecessary messages; sexually, ethnically, racially, or religiously offensive messages; continuing to send messages after a request to stop
- Actions that give simulated sign off messages, public announcements or fraudulent system responses; possessing or changing system control information, especially when used to defraud others, obtain passwords, gain access to and/or copy other user's electronic communications, or otherwise interfere with or destroy the work of other users.
- Forging email, including concealment of the sender's identity

9.5 **Email Distribution List Policy**

- 9.5.1 Email distribution lists are useful as a mechanism for issuing announcements, notices, and information to the entire staff or to specific groups. However, excessive use of these distribution lists can place a burden on the mail servers, especially when the messages include attached files, and can reduce the effectiveness of email as a means of communication.
- 9.5.2 It is necessary therefore to regulate the use of email distribution lists maintained on College of The Bahamas mail servers. Accordingly:
- a. Any administrator may request a group email distribution list to address the staff under that administrator's leadership.
 - b. Lists addressing staff from more than one administrative unit must be approved by the administrators of each affected unit or by the higher level administrator or vice president to whom the administrators of the affected units report.
 - c. All requests for the creation and use of group email distribution lists must be submitted to the Office of Public Affairs, Marketing and Communications, which will retain responsibility for the review and approval of such requests.
 - d. All requests must include the following information:
 - Owner - the name and title of the list owner/requestor
 - Senders - the names of all persons allowed to send messages to the list
 - Recipients - the names of all persons to be included in the list
 - Statement of Purpose – why the list is needed or how it will be used
 - Signature(s) of authorizing administrator(s)
 - e. Approved lists will be submitted to OIT for the necessary processing and maintenance.
 - f. Submission of requests implies that the requestor agrees to the following responsibilities:
 - Inform the IT Help Desk of changes to the senders and recipients lists in order to maintain the usefulness of the list. The Help Desk will add and delete names according to these instructions.
 - Notify the IT Help Desk when the list has reached the end of its usefulness.
 - Ensure that messages conform to the guidelines for use of email distribution lists.
 - g. Campus email distribution lists are not available to non-College of The Bahamas entities.

9.6 **Guidelines for Use of Email Lists**

- 9.6.1 Material sent to distribution lists must be related to the group being mailed.
- 9.6.2 Messages will be targeted to the group to which they pertain. Mass mailings to convey messages to only a subset of the listed recipients is prohibited.
- 9.6.3 Messages must pertain to College business. The distribution lists are not intended to be used for personal messages, jokes, chain letters, items for sale, or other subject matter.
- 9.6.4 Messages should be brief and use of attachments and graphics is discouraged.
- 9.6.5 Emails should be edited carefully for content before they are sent out to avoid the need for repeat postings for corrections.
- 9.6.6 The Sender is responsible for all replies, and complaints related to the message.

9.7 Email Signature

9.7.1 As one of the most frequently used forms of communication, email messages also serve as a reflection of The College. A standardised signature format will further reinforce The College's brand image, as well as convey important contact information. College employees shall use email signatures on outgoing mails that initiate communication. In continuing conversations via email, the inclusion of signatures on reply and forwarded email is optional.

9.7.2 Email signatures shall include:

- a. Employee's name
- b. Job title
- c. Department, office or school
- d. The name of the institution
- e. The relevant telephone number, including area code
- f. The employee's email address
- g. The College's website address

This information should be in plain text format to easily accommodate all types of users.

9.7.3 Other information that may be included in the signature format shall include:

- a. Professional and/or academic designations
- b. In the case of College of The Bahamas alumni, the words "COB Alumna" or "COB Alumnus" and the graduation year
- c. A confidentiality clause, subject to the approval of the Council Secretary, which shall be included below the signature
- d. An email disclaimer, subject to the approval of the Council Secretary, which shall be included below the signature
- e. The relevant fax number, including area code
- f. Links to College approved social media, which shall be limited to no more than two such links

9.7.4 Things that shall be excluded from email signatures include although are not necessarily limited to:

- a. Quotations, excerpts or references from or to any material
- b. Use of watermarked, coloured or photographic backgrounds