

CHAPTER 8: LIBRARY COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY POLICY

Section I. Purpose

- A. This chapter applies to all Library programs, offices, and employees.
- B. The chapter covers the release of Library information to the public by employees through the news and information media, whether through print, broadcast, web-based, social media or other information channels. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. News media requests for official interviews on Library-related issues and actions.
 - 2. News releases, advisories, and bulletins
 - 3. Speeches and statements about official business for public release
 - 4. Letters to the editor, opinion pieces, and other editorial products expressing the Library's viewpoint on Library-related issues and actions; and
 - 5. Similar expressions of Library policy posted or distributed using electronic methods, such as social media and Web site postings.

Section II. Organizational Communication Goals

- A. The Library supports a culture of openness with the news media and the public that values the free exchange of ideas, data, and information and that provides for the dissemination of accurate information in a timely manner.
- B. The Library will use clear, concise language, avoid jargon, limit the use of technical terms in public communications wherever possible, and explain any necessary technical terms for a general audience.
- C. The Library will uphold high standards of ethical conduct for all employees who communicate official Library policy, opinions and actions.

Section III. Communication Rules.

- A. Official expressions of Library policy or opinion are different from individual employee opinions of Library policies, actions and decisions. Employees represent the Library and must apply good judgment. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- B. Employees may speak directly with the news media and share information, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1. Employees may provide routine information such as information on operating hours or the details of a public program or event.
 - 2. Employees who want to contact national or significant regional print broadcast, or electronic media organizations to generate interest in the Library should notify their Supervisor in advance. Once notified by an employee, Supervisors will consult with the Library Director and Program/Marketing Coordinator in advance.
 - 3. If contacted by news media for anything other than routine information, employees should in all cases refer the media representative to the Library Director. The Director may delegate an employee to provide a formal response when appropriate.

Section IV. Responsibilities

A. Director

- 1. Overall leadership and direction for the Library's communications efforts and executive approval of all official expressions of Library policy and opinion.
- 2. Promote a culture of openness with the news media and the public.
- 3. Provide guidance and have final authority on the development and use of print, non-print, social media and web communications.
- 4. Review requests for official communications as needed, and delegate response to appropriate employee if appropriate.

B. Program Marketing Coordinator-

1. Providing general library information in print and non-print media including regular marketing and promotional content related to Library programs and services.

Section V. Advocacy (6/10/2021)

A. Advocacy is deliberate, persuasive communication that follows a structured and sequenced plan of action intended to start, direct or prevent a specific policy change.

B. Advocacy requires building momentum and support for the proposed policy, idea or recommendation.

1. The goal of Library advocacy is to ensure a strong, sustainable future for the institution.
2. Advocacy involves communication across multiple platforms, including:
 - a. News media requests for official interviews on Library-related issues and actions.
 - b. News releases, advisories, and bulletins
 - c. Speeches and statements about official business for public release
 - d. Letters to the editor, opinion pieces, and other editorial products expressing the Library's viewpoint on Library-related issues and actions
 - e. Expressions of Library policy posted or distributed using electronic methods, such as social media and Web site postings.

C. Advocacy is carried out by organizations, associations, or coalitions representing the interests of the Library. Individuals may lead the effort.

1. Advocates educate policymakers, stakeholders and the community at large about the needs of the Library and the people the Library serves.
2. Advocates develop relationships in which they are trusted voices on policy issues and helpful resources for policymakers, stakeholders and the community at large.
3. Advocacy must identify the right audience.
4. Advocacy must clearly state what the Library wants to achieve and how it relates to the audience.

D. The Library supports a culture of openness with policymakers, stakeholders, media and the community at large and values the free exchange of ideas, data, and information.

1. The Library will use clear, concise language, avoid jargon, limit the use of technical terms and explain any necessary technical terms for a general audience.
2. The Library will uphold high standards of ethical conduct for all advocates and
3. Advocates do not allow personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the Library, Library goals or policy.
4. Advocates must understand and respect the confidential nature of some Library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information and open records.
5. It is incumbent upon an advocate to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

E. The Director is responsible for

1. Overall leadership and direction for the Library's communications efforts and executive approval of all official expressions of Library policy and opinion.
2. Promote a culture of openness with the news media and the public.
3. Provide guidance and have final authority on the development and use of print, non-print, social media and web communications.
4. Review requests for official communications as needed, and delegate response to appropriate employee if appropriate.

F. The Program Marketing Coordinator is responsible for

1. Providing general library information in print and non-print media including regular marketing and promotional content related to Library programs and services.

G. The Board of Trustees is responsible for

1. The President of the Library Board of Trustees will serve as the Board's primary communicator for all official expressions of Library policy and opinion. The President will coordinate with the Director and Program/Marketing Coordinator to verify that all forms of official Board communication are consistent and accurate.

2. A different officer, member or ad hoc committee of the Board may be appointed to serve based on the audience, message to be communicated and scope of the campaign.
3. The President of the Library Board of Trustees or other appointed Board member/s will coordinate with the Library Director and Program/Marketing Coordinator to develop content, timetables and action plans when specific advocacy campaigns are undertaken.