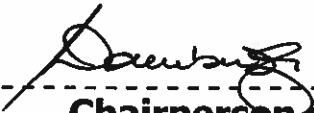


Policy ID
MCA:05



INTERNAL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Sponsor Division	Marketing, Communication & Advancement
Responsible Department	Advancement
Related WSU Policies and Acts	
Policy name	Act Reference
Code of Conduct	Bill of Rights
Media Relations Policy	Promotion of Access to Information Act
	Protection of Personal Information Act
	Copyright Act
	Defamation Act
	Film & Publications Act
	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
	Information Act
	Privacy Act
Change History	
Approval authority	Council
Approval Date	31 March 2017
Latest revision date	
Effective date	Immediately
Number of pages	11
 ----- Chairperson of Council	

1. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide a framework to guide communication between Walter Sisulu University, its staff and students in order to create a harmonious relationship between the parties.

The ultimate goal of this relationship is to promote the university as a first choice educational institution for students, academic and support staff.

Staff and students are brand ambassadors of the university and internal relationships have a direct bearing on an external brand image. The WSU brand promises through advertising (external) should be what is delivered by the staff and students (internal).

Another key goal of internal communication is to present a unified face to external role players.

Furthermore, an important role of internal communication is to demonstrate the six values of the University through behaviour and other tangible outputs. These values are:

- Academic freedom
- Quality
- Access and success
- Transformation
- People development
- Resource consciousness

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Internal Communication Policy applies to the all staff (permanent, contract, temporary, volunteer and interns) and students of the Walter Sisulu University.
- 2.2 At an operational level, that is, within departments and faculties, the responsibility of communicating with staff and students in order to be effective, lies with the heads of the faculties and heads of departments and support units.
- 2.3 The Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement (MCA), in collaboration with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor & Principal is responsible for the corporate communication of the university.

Corporate communication is communication which delivers the official view of the University to a targeted audience, using the University's official platforms which are:

- Publications
- Website
- Email

- Mobile communication such as SMS
- Notice boards
- Other below-the-line material such as posters
- Social media such as Facebook and Twitter

2.4. The Policy recognises that though all internal communication may be for the use of staff and students, this information will be consumed by external audiences for which it was not originally designed. This is viewed as both an opportunity and risk.

2.5. The Policy also recognises that when a staff member of the university is identified as such, the staff member views and actions (including personal) may be seen to be as authorised and/or sanctioned by the University and hence is a risk for the University.

3. Objectives

3.1. The main objective of this policy is to ensure that communication by and within the organisation is well co-ordinated, effectively managed, and is responsive to the diverse needs of the University's staff and students.

3.2. Communication should also be a unifying tool and create a common understanding of the University which is shared by its staff and students.

3.3. This policy applies to the university's staff and students at all four campuses and the institutional office. While all employees should be familiar with the policy, in particular, leaders of support and academic departments should incorporate its principles into their communication leadership and management.

4. Definitions of Key Words or Concepts

Communication

Two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning.

Brand

Unique design, sign, symbol, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors.

Internal communication

The sharing of information within an organisation for business purposes.

External communication

The sharing of information with individuals or groups outside of, and not closely connected with, an organisation with whom its communicates and/or to which promotional efforts are aimed.

Stakeholders

It is a person, group or organisation that has interest or concern in an organisation.

Platforms/Channels/Tools

The tools which are used by a department, faculty, unit or MCA to influence stakeholders.

Social media

These are primarily internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information among people. Social media includes popular networking websites/mobi-site, like Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, Snapchat etc. It involves blogging and forums and any aspect of an interactive presence which allows individuals to engage in conversations with one another.

Media

Communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated. Media includes every broadcasting medium and other mediums such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, notice boards and internet.

General style guide

This is the prescribed format for each type of written communication that must be followed by all departments and agencies of an organisation. It usually covers standard language and terminology.

Corporate identity manual

A corporate identity manual is a manual containing guidelines for corporate identity applications. It is a corporate identity management tool. It is used to ensure correct application of the corporate identity following its implementation.

5. Principles

5.1. General Principles

- 5.1.1. Staff and students in the University have a right of access to all relevant information pertaining to the vision and activities of the organisation and to all information relating to their rights, responsibilities and privileges as University employees and students.

- 5.1.2. Communication through internal media channels must not be for private use and benefit. Staff and students may not promote external products and service providers without written approval, unless those services providers are official University suppliers.
- 5.1.3. Whereas the marketing and communication department facilitates communication and create platforms/channels within the organisation, it is the responsibility of every manager and supervisor to communicate all relevant organisational information to his/her staff. This should be done through regular meetings or other preferred and practical mechanisms which can include Whatsapp.
- 5.1.4. Equally, it is the responsibility of every staff member and student to seek information that will enable him/her to understand:
- The vision of the University
 - His or her role to effectively execute his/her responsibilities within the organisation.
- 5.1.5. Similarly, communication is part of the management function and is part of all levels of managers' performance agreement.
- 5.1.6. In the case of a student, he or she should ensure he or she has the necessary information regarding University academic processes in order to meet University procedures.
- 5.1.7. Students are also required to provide the University with the necessary information in order to meet its obligations and responsibilities. This includes the updating of contact details such as cellular phone number, email address and residential/postal address.

5.2. Responsibilities of staff and students

- 5.2.1. Notwithstanding the rights of individuals to freedom of speech within the law, staff of the University have an obligation, as expressed in the Staff Code of Conduct, to act in the best interests of the University at all times.
- 5.2.2. Staff are expected to participate fully in University consultation and decision-making processes on any official University matters and to refrain from debating opinions on such matters through the media.
- 5.2.3. When deemed appropriate, students are also asked to engage with the University on matters which will impact upon them.
- 5.2.4. Under no circumstances are employees or students allowed to utilise the University's resources to send out distasteful communication, sensitive

information or other information which contravenes any legislation or University policy, to any recipient.

5.3. Contact with the media by staff members as private individuals

- 5.3.1. The University affirms the right of staff and students to interact freely with the media as private individuals.
- 5.3.2. When staff members discuss with the media, or write about, matters outside their areas of work, they should make it clear that they are speaking as private individuals and not as staff members. The use of University position titles, letterhead or postal addresses is prohibited in this context.
- 5.3.3. Guidance of the use of the media in exercising academic freedom, refer to the University's media relations policy.
- 5.3.4. Other guidance is also provided in the University's media relations policy.

5.4. Crisis Communication

- 5.4.1. Campus Security staff are responsible for notifying the Campus Rector, relevant senior staff and the Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement immediately of any serious security issue or physical emergency that occurs at the University (for example, an accidental death on campus, a fire, or significant police involvement with a matter connected to the University).
- 5.4.2. The Department of Student Affairs is responsible for notifying the Vice-Chancellor of any serious student-related matter.
- 5.4.3. The Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement, in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and any other relevant staff, is responsible for releasing any information to the media about an emergency situation.

5.5. Confidential information and requests

- 5.5.1. Confidential University information should not be disclosed to the media or be made public under any circumstances. Requests for information that is confidential should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor's Office, so that these may be considered within the provisions of the Official Information Act and/or the Privacy Act.
- 5.5.2. Information about individual staff or students may only be given to media with the explicit consent of the individuals concerned, except in

exceptional circumstances with guidance from the University's Legal Officer or the Vice-Chancellor's Office.

5.5.3. Any staff member who receives a request from the media for information should forward it immediately to the Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement who will respond on behalf of the University.

5.5.4. Staff and students are prohibited from sharing staff and student data with third parties, this is in line with the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act.

5.6. General editorial style guide

5.6.1. The University's editorial style guide provides guidelines as to how English language styling should be used.

5.6.2. All staff are encouraged to be familiar with the University's writing style for general communication.

5.7. Photographs

5.7.1. Photographs of guests, students and staff are undertaken on the understanding that when the photograph is taken, participants in the photograph give tacit permission for the University to use the photographs in a responsible way in the promotion of the University.

5.8. Corporate website

5.8.1. The University's website should be aligned to the corporate brand identity manual. MCA, together with the various heads of departments, should ensure that:

5.8.1.1. Information on the programmes, services and initiatives is regularly updated, accurate and easy to understand;

5.8.1.2. The website has a channel to receive and acknowledge public feedback;

5.8.1.3. All PDF documents should open in a new window to ensure that the website is open when the PDF is closed.

5.8.1.4. MCA will guide the faculties and department correspondents, who will be responsible for the uploading of content onto the website and will have the similar roles and responsibilities as those of the social account manager (See 5.9.3 which follows).

5.9. Social media

5.9.1. The University recognises the importance and benefits of communicating through social media. The University uses this platform in various ways:

- to disseminate relevant news to the University's online stakeholders
- to listen to their voices and perceptions about the University.

5.9.2. Key guidelines for social media uses:

5.9.2.1. Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about University students, employees, or alumni. Employees and students should adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees or students who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

5.9.2.2. Respect copyright and fair use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university.

5.9.2.3. Don't use University logos for endorsements, particularly personal social media sites: Do not use the University's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

5.9.2.4. Respect University time and property: University computers and time on the job are reserved for university-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with the University's ICT policy.

5.9.2.5. Terms of service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

5.9.3. When faculties or departments wish to use social media for university reasons, additional considerations are required:

5.9.3.1. The role of Account Managers/Faculty correspondents: In the case where a student or staff member is responsible for creating content and maintaining a department or faculty social media account, this designated person becomes a de facto University "spokesperson".

5.9.3.2. Hence, the spokesperson should serve the interests of the University.

5.9.3.3. Requests for accounts to be part of the University's Social Media Community should be notified by the department and Faculty.

5.9.3.4. All accounts and Social Media Account Managers/Correspondents should adhere to all applicable University policies.

5.9.3.5. All accounts and Social Media Account Managers/Correspondents will adhere to all requirements and regulations in this document.

5.9.3.6. MCA reserves the right to access and manage Official accounts. It reserves the right to edit and delete content as appropriate. The right to seize and shut down accounts if necessary is also reserved.

5.9.4. The following principles shape the University's management of social media platforms

5.9.4.1. The University trusts that good judgment will be used and does not plan to actively screen the content you post.

5.9.4.2. The University will respond to content if/when able and/or applicable. The University is not responsible for any unanswered posts or inaccurate information. However, the University claims the right to remove comments and content from social media accounts if these:

5.9.4.2.1. Are inaccurate, defame, or otherwise impact the University's reputation and integrity.

5.9.4.2.2. Contain confidential information, legal information, and materials under copyright.

5.9.4.2.3. Violate the copyrights, trademarks, and/or intellectual property rights of the University or third parties.

5.9.4.2.4. Compromise the privacy of personnel, students, interested parties, and the University by disclosing confidential and personal information or contravenes South African legislation which impacts right to expression, privacy or defamation, for example.

5.9.4.3. Furthermore, the University's policies strictly prohibit the following actions.

5.9.4.3.1. Impersonation of others.

5.9.4.3.2. Use of offensive language, libellous, slanderous, unlawful, threatening speech.

5.9.4.3.3. Posts are likely to be removed if deemed by the administrators of the site to be potentially libellous or if it maligns a particular person or group.

5.9.4.3.4. Include spam, repetitive/irrelevant posting, or other activities judged to fall into these categories. This may include topics outside the scope of immediate interest to our community and posts promoting products and/or services unrelated to the University.

6. Statutory structure to approve, adjust and review the policy

The Internal Communication Policy is:

- Step 1: Drafted, reviewed and adjusted by the Department of Marketing, Communication & Advancement (MCA),
- Step 2 and 3: It is then sent to Institutional Management Committee (IMC).
- Step 4 and 5: Following these steps, the Walter Sisulu University Council will give its final approval.

7. Administration of Policy

The Office of the Vice-Chancellor & Principal delegates the authority of administration of the Internal Communication Policy to the Department of Marketing, Communication & Advancement (MCA).

8. Custodianship of Policy

The custodian of the Internal Communication Policy is the Department of Marketing, Communication & Advancement (MCA).

9. Effective Date of Policy

The Internal Communication Policy comes into effect on the date of the approval of the Walter Sisulu University Council.