

**Montreat College**  
**Communications Office**  
**Media Relations Policy**  
**Effective 6-15-2011**

**Media Relations**

Effective communication with the media is critical to Montreat College's ability to carry out its mission and promote continued support for the college. Effective media relations best serves the college by:

- Increasing public awareness of Montreat College in the community.
- Managing the Montreat College brand by informing and creating good perceptions regarding Montreat College.
- Informing the public of what we can do for them, building goodwill among the community.
- Promoting the college's achievements, activities, and events of significance.
- Managing reputation when in a crisis situation.
- Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents and issues of a controversial and/or sensitive nature.

**Media Relations Policy**

The preparation and release of all information and publicity concerning the college, intended for distribution to the media, is coordinated by the Communications Office, unless otherwise authorized by the president. Having one college point-of-contact fosters media confidence in the institution and ensures that the college speaks with one voice, providing timely and accurate information.

The Director of Communications serves as the official college spokesperson and conveys the official college position on issues of general college-wide impact or significance, or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature.

In cases of critical significance to the college, the Director of Communications will work with other college officials to develop "talking points" to detail the known facts of the situation and summarize the college's position.

The Communications Office will assist the media in contacting members of the Montreat College community. Student contact information will not be released by the Communications Office without permission of the student. The Montreat College switchboard does not release student contact information.

## **Working with the Media**

All reporters requesting information about the college must begin their inquiry with the Communications Office. The department will refer the reporter to the appropriate college representative if questions cannot be completely answered. If necessary, the Communications Office will coordinate a time and place for the reporter to interview the college representative.

Members of the faculty and staff are free to respond to requests from the media only when referred by the Director of Communications. In the case of direct contact from the media, the Director of Communication should be notified as soon as possible, preferably within an hour of initial media contact.

Any employee who has been contacted by a reporter and has not received a media referral notice from the Communications Office must refer the reporter's request back to the Communications Office as follows:

*"Have you talked with our Communications Office about this? Let me connect you with their office. Thank you."*

Transfer telephone inquiries to extension 3777 and email inquiries to the Director of Communications.

## **Legal Policies**

### FERPA

Montreat College is bound by requirements and guidelines of the Freedom of Information Act (FERPA), as well as other federal and state statutes in providing public and media access to official college documents and records. In general, college employees are not authorized to mail or hand out written information and documents to a reporter. All requests for official documents must be made through the Registrar's Office. Freedom of Information requests should be directed to the Communications Office.