WEST LIBERTY STATE COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
POLICY 52: PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE

INQUIRIES FROM THE MEDIA
As a general rule, the media representative should contact the director of college relations and marketing (DCRM) for any information about the college. If the inquiry cannot be handled by the DCRM, the media representative may be referred to the correct administrative officer who can handle the inquiry.

Anyone other than the DCRM talking officially with the media should understand that he/she may be quoted. If he/she doesn’t wish to be quoted, he/she should tell the reporter indicating the conversation if “off-the-record.” This phrase should be used sparingly to maintain credibility. Most reporters will honor such a request. The media representative should always be treated with the utmost courtesy and respect.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEDIA
All requests for interviews with college personnel should be directed to the DCRM. The DCRM will discuss the subject matter of the interview first with the media representative and then with the interviewee. (The DCRM will be present at the interview to provide any assistance with the interview and to aid the reporter with any follow-up material.) If a media representative calls a member of the college personnel directly for an interview concerning college policy, that person should direct them to the DCRM before making a commitment.

AUTHORIZED SPOKESPERSON
The President, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment, Vice President of Administration, CFO, and Director of Athletics, as well as the DCRM should be the only people authorized to present the college’s position on matters as designated by the president or appropriate to specific issues under their area of responsibility. Exceptions may be made with the permission of the President in conjunction with the DCRM.

WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR THE MEDIA
The DCRM is solely responsible for all written material expressing official college business and prepared for general dissemination to the media. If there are exceptions when college personnel wish to prepare their own press releases, those releases should be submitted to the DCRM for editing, possible photographic support, and policy proofing.

CRISIS PLAN
In a crisis, the DCRM is designated as the official spokesperson for the college to prevent rumors and conflicting viewpoints. The following steps should be followed in the event of a crisis:
1. Immediate notification of appropriate college officials.
2. Either a meeting or a telephone conference to determine action to be taken.
3. A fact sheet or press release should be drafted and should contain a summary statement of the situation including all known details to be released to the media. This information should be made available to (and approved by) the President and appropriate Vice President(s). The fact sheet should be analyzed with respect to the public’s right to know balanced against concerns for privacy and security.
4. Determine key constituencies that should be informed of the crisis, such as administration, faculty, staff, and students. Among the groups that should be considered for communication in a crisis situation depending on the severity of the crisis are; law enforcement agencies, trustees, parents of students, general public, mass media and alumni.
5. Determine whether the magnitude of the crisis merits establishing a Crisis Command Center and/or Media Briefing Center for coordination of crisis control efforts.
6. If the crisis is of sufficient magnitude, a press conference should be called to make an official statement to the media and to answer any questions. If a press conference is necessary, it should be convened in the R. Emmett Boyle Conference Center of the ASRC. The DCRM will be responsible for organizing and conducting the press conference. College personnel attending the press conference should be the President, the Provost / Vice President of Academic Affairs, and any other pertinent administrative officer. Additionally, a representative of campus security, the President of Faculty Senate, and President of Student Government may also attend if appropriate.
7. If there is a fatality, the name of the victim will be withheld pending notification of the family. The DCRM or other appropriate member of the WLSC staff may be designated to notify the family.
8. The dissemination of the names of any students involved in any kind of crisis will be released to the media only after permission to release such names has been reached by appropriate officers of the College and Campus Safety.
9. The DCRM will be responsible for providing the media with follow-up information and any new developments.
10. The College must always be completely open and honest with the media during a crisis. Approved by the WLSC Board of Governors on 12/11/06.