



## REVISION HISTORY

New document.

## BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

To establish reactive and proactive protocols for communication with the media, ensuring timely, accurate, and consistent dissemination of information about UUCWC.

## DEFINITIONS

*Media* refers to external news organizations, including but not limited to print, broadcast, Internet-based, and social media organizations. *Reactive communication* refers to instances in which the media contact UUCWC. *Proactive communication* refers to instances in which UUCWC initiates contact with the media. See **Guidelines** for examples.

## POLICY

It is the policy of UUCWC that in instances of reactive communication:

- The minister or her/his designee(s) has authority to speak with the media on behalf of UUCWC. If the minister is unavailable, then the president of the Board of Trustees has authority to address the media on behalf of UUCWC.
  - Individuals not specifically designated by the minister do not represent UUCWC when speaking with the media.

In instances of proactive communication:

- The minister, in consultation with the chair of the Communications Ministry Team (Communications), may initiate contact with the media, or
- The chair of Communications and/or his/her designee, in consultation with the minister, may initiate contact with the media.
- No other individuals are authorized to contact the media on behalf of UUCWC.

## GUIDELINES

The purpose of authorizing individuals to communicate with the media is to ensure that the church is represented in the media accurately and in a manner consistent with its mission and vision. Procedures will be developed by the minister, office administrator, and/or chair of Communications together or individually to ensure that in the case of reactive communication, authorized individuals are in timely contact with the media and, for proactive communication, messaging about the church is consistent with UUCWC's mission and UU Principles.

Examples of reactive communication include but are not limited to (a) the need to respond to media inquiries in the event of an incident on UUCWC grounds or involving an employee of the church, or (b) in response to a reporter seeking comment about an issue in the news unrelated to the church. Examples of proactive communication include but are not limited to (a) issuance of a news release or a pitch letter to selected media or (b) placing a statement or image in the name of UUCWC on a social media outlet.



Media contact information on the “contact” page of the UUCWC website will direct media to the office administrator. The office administrator serves as a triage officer, whose role is to direct the media to an officially designated spokesperson for the church (see Media Relations Policy). If messages are left when the office is closed or not staffed, the office manager will follow up when next in the office. In the event of an incident that may prompt immediate media coverage, the office manager should be notified about the event and monitor phone messages or other communications from the media.

In the event of such an incident, the minister, president of the Board of Trustees, and/or the chair of Communications may be contacted if the office manager cannot be reached.

In cases of reactive communication, the office manager will direct the media representative to the minister or other individual authorized to speak on behalf of the church. The office administrator, in consultation with the minister and Communications, may develop procedures for responding to unsolicited media inquiries.

In the event of an incident, congregants may be approached by the media for comment. Unless otherwise designated by the minister, congregants may represent only themselves, and not UUCWC, when responding to media inquiries.

Communications is responsible for the issuance of news releases, community calendar listings, pitch letters, tip sheets, and photographs about the church, its activities, and its minister. News releases and related collateral are issued for three primary purposes: (1) to market the church to the external community; (2) to promote church- and committee-sponsored events; (3) to position the minister and UUCWC in a way that is consistent with our church’s mission and vision and with Unitarian Universalist principles. News releases promoting events sponsored by external organizations will be issued only if there is significant UUCWC involvement and, depending on the circumstances, may need to be drafted in cooperation with that organization.

Members or friends involved in church- and committee-sponsored activities may ask Communications to draft a release for them, or they may submit a draft news release to the Communications Committee for review, approval, and release. Individuals may not issue a news release promoting church- or committee-sponsored activities on their own to the media.

To ensure timely dissemination, members and friends should request publicity support from Communications no less than 30 days prior to the date of the event.

Members or friends named or quoted in, or photographed for, news releases or other proactive media outreach must sign a publicity release form (see Appendix A). Forms may be [downloaded from the UUCWC website](#) and left in the Communications mailbox in the office or e-mailed to the Communications chair. *There are no exceptions to this requirement.* Communications maintains a database of members and friends who have signed publicity release forms.

Communications, in consultation with the minister and office administrator, may develop procedures for proactive media outreach.

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