

## **Draft - Best Practices Approach to Communication**

We can approach communication with the media, the legislature or any other groups of interests, by creating policy or adhering to best practice that is reviewed and accepted by the Board annually upon new appointment of members.

Communication: Best practice for exchange of ideas, issues, debate, and outcomes preceding or following a meeting of the SBE.

Ensure that information, debate, and exchange of ideas has been appropriately aired in public session of the meeting. Once the meeting is declared adjourned, no further debate or discussion in any form should continue through a public forum. Any discussion with any outside person or group must be made clear they are speaking as an individual and not in any manner for the Board unless specifically charged to do so.

Distinction between Individual or Member of the Board

- Speaking for the Board as whole
  - As a member of a Committee spokesperson or spokesperson of the Board
  - As declared by Chair of Committee or Chair of Board
  - The Chair as directed by the Board
- Speaking for the majority/minority following a close vote
  - As declared by the Chair
- Speaking as an individual citizen about Board business/issues
  - Must be made explicitly clear that one is speaking as an individual only

We can simple modify and edit current document yearly and all sign that we agree and understand the intent.

# **The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Policy on communications:**

## **A. Communications with the Media**

1. Reports on actions of the Board on matters of public interest will be given to the press as promptly as possible by Agency staff the External Relations Department.

2. Statements on matters of an obviously controversial nature shall be made by the Board Chair or the Commissioner.

3. No Board member shall make or issue any public statement on an obviously controversial subject which might reasonably be construed as a statement of the official position of the Board without the advance approval of the Board Chair.

4. It is not the intent of this policy statement to stifle the right of freedom of speech of anyone speaking in a personal capacity where that person makes it clear that he or she is not speaking for the Board or the members of the Board. To the extent possible, Board members are expected to coordinate media contacts with the Board Liaison who will provide advance notice to the External Relations Department regarding any media contacts and press statements.

## **B. Communications with Elected Officials.**

When a Board member would like to schedule a meeting with an elected official regarding matters relating to the Board, 's budget and/or legislative priorities, it is preferred the Board member shall notify request that the Board Liaison so that External Relations staff Department may schedule the meeting, provide all necessary information/talking points, and accompany the Board member as needed/requested.

## **C. Communications with Institutional Representatives.**

When a Board member is contacted by an administrator, faculty member, or governmental relations staff member from an institution of higher education regarding a controversial issue relating to the Board, the Board member shall notify the Board Liaison who in turn shall notify the Board Chair and Vice Chair.

## **D. Student Complaints.**

When a Board member is contacted by a student with a complaint or request for information, it is preferred that the Board member shall refer the individual to the Board LiaisonGeneral Counsel's Office for further assistance. The Board LiaisonGeneral Counsel's Office shall notify the Board member how the complaint or request for information was handled by Agency staff.

## **E. Speaking Invitations.**

When a Board member accepts an invitation to speak at a public event on behalf of the Board, it is preferred that the Board member shall contact the Board LiaisonExternal Relations Department to request necessary information/talking points. The Board LiaisonExternal Relations Department shall also notify the Board Chair and Vice Chair of the speaking invitation.