



Board of Trustees Policy

BOT Policy No.: BOTP-2008-01		BOT Policy Name: Communications Policy	
Initial Adoption Date: February 12, 2008		Revision Date(s): June 7, 2018, April 15, 2026	
Responsible Unit: Office of Communications		Responsible Executive: VP, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer	
Authority	BOG Regulation 1.001; FAMU Regulation 1.021		
Applicability	All FAMU employees, appointees, volunteers, vendors and contractors		

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

The Office of Communications is charged and entrusted with communicating the storied history of Florida A&M University (FAMU or University), protecting its reputation, and safeguarding its brand. This Communications Policy sets forth guidelines and requirements for all media and press communications, brand licensing, uses of the University’s official seal, trademarks, logos, copyrights, and other intellectual property rights, and related issues. Florida A&M University is committed to transparency and responsiveness. To maintain and advance these important institutional objectives, the Board of Trustees hereby declares that:

- A. The Office of Communications shall be responsible for generating, distributing and monitoring communications and news coverage relating to FAMU, including, without limitation, promoting its outstanding academic programs, initiatives, important events, and key achievements of students, faculty, and staff.
- B. The Office of Communications shall be the sole and official voice of the University to the media and is singularly entrusted with establishing and cultivating relationships with journalists, publications, and broadcast networks/channels, as well as responding to media inquiries, issuing official statements and announcements, and providing guidance and leadership to the FAMU community about relevant media guidelines and best practices.
- C. The Office of Communications shall prepare (or review and edit or approve) all news releases and communications relating to the University—ranging from major/significant stories concerning achievements to unique programs and offerings—in alignment with the University’s mission and strategic priorities and goals. All media-related requests for statements, responses, and/or interviews shall be promptly provided to the Office of Communications for review prior to any further communications with the requestor.
- D. No FAMU employee, appointee, volunteer, vendor, contractor or other person or entity shall:
 - (i) violate the University’s rights in its official seal, trademarks, logos or copyrights through the sale, offer for sale, manufacture, or distribution of goods or services;
 - (ii) make any statements or representation whatsoever, or use any false designation of origin or false description, or perform any act, which is likely to lead members of the general public to believe that any service or product being manufactured, distributed, produced or sold is in any way associated or connected with FAMU, or licensed, sponsored, approved, or authorized by FAMU; or
 - (iii) commit or undertake any action constituting infringement of the

University's official seal, trademarks, logos, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights. Any violation of this section may subject the violator (and those acting in concert therewith) to civil and/or criminal liability to the fullest extent of all applicable federal and state laws.

- E. Whenever contacted by a member of the media in relation to any issue or subject involving or related to the University, *prior to responding to or communicating with the requestor*, all FAMU employees, appointees, volunteers, vendors and contractors shall immediately provide notice of the request to the Office of Communications at 850-599-3413 or at publicrelations@famuedu. Requests for public records shall be immediately directed to publicrecords@famuedu.
- F. No FAMU employee, appointee, volunteer, vendor, contractor or University affiliate shall release, publish or communicate any sensitive or confidential information to a member of the media or press (or any other person or entity) unless such release, publication or communication is pre-approved in writing by the Office of Communications or the Office of the General Counsel. By way of example, but not limitation, such sensitive or confidential information includes the termination of an employee, an ongoing investigation, non-directory student information under FERPA, a legal matter, or an allegation of sexual harassment or misconduct.

Note: The University's standard practice is not to comment on ongoing investigations, legal matters, pending legislative actions, or personnel matters.

II. Definitions

- A. **Advertising:** The action of calling something to the attention of the public, especially by paid announcements.
- B. **Brand:** A public image, reputation, or identity conceived of as something to be marketed or promoted.
- C. **Logo:** A symbol or other design adopted by an organization to identify its products, uniforms, vehicles, etc.
- D. **Media:** Members of the mass media (such as news outlets and on-line media).
- E. **Media Briefing:** An act or instance of giving instructions or information to members of the media.
- F. **News Conference:** Also known as a press conference, an interview or announcement given to the press by scheduled appointment.
- G. **Seal:** An official emblem, symbol, or device used to authenticate documents, certify authority, or represent an organization, country, or individual.
- H. **Spokesperson:** A person authorized to speak as the representative of another person or entity, often in a professional capacity.

- I. **University Identity Program:** The program managed by the Office of Communications to set and enforce the mandatory editorial styles, typography, and graphic standards used by the University for all publications.
- J. **Web Council:** A group of designated campus representatives who review and approve or disapprove the use of websites and microsites recommended and managed by campus units.

III. Procedures – General Guidelines

- A. The Office of Communications shall serve as the sole reviewer, facilitator, and approver of all media-related interviews, statements and outreaches related to the University in any form. It is responsible for assisting media members in determining the appropriate University representative to discuss a particular subject matter concerning the University.
- B. All University leaders, employees, appointees, volunteers, vendors and contractors shall promptly inform and coordinate with the Office of Communications to develop and distribute accurate news and information about the University and to determine the appropriate University representative to participate in a media interview, press statement or response, or media event.
- C. While University leaders, employees, appointees, volunteers, vendors and contractors may speak with members of the media on matters within their scope of employment or engagement with the University and their professional expertise, knowledge, and delegated authority, they may not speak outside the scope of such professional expertise or engagement, or represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the University, unless expressly authorized in advance by the Office of Communications. All media inquiries and responses, whether solicited or unsolicited, formal or informal, shall be promptly referred to and coordinated through the Office of Communications. This mission-critical coordination: (i) ensures the accuracy and consistency of all University-related messaging; (ii) identifies and prepares appropriate spokespersons on behalf of the University; (iii) supports compliance with applicable University policies, public records and open-government laws; and (iv) safeguards the University's legal, operational, and reputational interests.
- D. The Office of Communications develops key messages for the University and is available to provide media training to University personnel and stakeholders in anticipation of meeting or communicating with members of the media.
- E. The Office of Communications manages the University's official Communicators Network. Each University department/unit shall appoint one representative to this Network who shall be trained on best practices, policies, procedures, and guidelines for promoting their department/unit and sharing accurate news and information. The Network appointees are responsible for applying their training in the best interests of the University and sharing such information with their department/unit leaders and colleagues.
- F. Journalists and media members occasionally request interviews with FAMU leaders, faculty, staff, and students related to specific news matters and developments. If a request is in response to the Office of Communications contacting the media, an authorized University representative has already been designated to speak on behalf of the University, and the Office of Communications will arrange the requested interview with the assigned designee.

However, if a request for an interview is unsolicited, the Office of Communications must research the requestor to ensure legitimacy and the request to determine the appropriate person to speak accurately and effectively on behalf of the University about the subject matter of the request.

IV. News Conferences & Media Briefings, University Spokespersons, News Releases

- A. As a best practice, University-related news conferences and media briefings are reserved for announcing significant news concerning the University that may have an important impact on the University's reputation, constituents, external community, and future direction. Consequently, it is important that such events not be overused or used to announce news that is neither significant to the University nor approved in advance by the Office of Communications. The Office of Communications shall review and approve (or disapprove) any and all news conferences and media briefings prior to any such events being scheduled or held. The Office of Communications shall also review and approve (or disapprove) any media-related actions or communications stemming from any external partnerships, activities, projects or programs that involve the University and/or use the University's name or likeness.
- B. As with all universities and colleges, a controversial situation or crisis may arise that relates to FAMU. *Immediately upon learning of any such situation or crisis, it is important to take a proactive approach by immediately notifying the Office of Communications.* It is best to prepare for such occurrences as early as possible. In instances where there is a question about the legality of releasing information, before any such information is released, the Office of Communications and all other University departments/units receiving media and public information requests must first notify and consult with the Office of the General Counsel.
- C. **Designated University Spokespersons**
1. The Board of Trustees recognizes and designates the President as the primary spokesperson for the University. The Chair of the Board of Trustees is the only person authorized to speak for the Board of Trustees.
 2. While the President is the primary spokesperson of the University, the President has designated the Chief Marketing & Communications Officer (Office of Communications lead) as the official spokesperson in external matters including weather, safety and health emergencies, legal matters, and other crisis situations. This individual also provides a point of contact between media and University personnel and resources.
- D. **News Releases**
1. The Office of Communications prepares and approves all news releases to local, regional, national, and international media prior to distribution, with the exception of sports-related releases (unless otherwise directed by the President). However, the Department of Athletics and the Office of Communications shall collaborate in good faith to ensure consistency with the University's messaging and style guidelines prior to releasing University-related information to the public and media.
 2. News releases from all University colleges, schools, centers, institutes, departments, offices, or the Board of Trustees shall be submitted to the Office of Communications

for review and approval (or revision) before the release, which must align with the University's policies, strategic plan, presidential priorities, mission and style guidelines. News releases and other information for dissemination to the media or public must be pre-approved and distributed by the Office of Communications based on subject matter and relevance to the University's brand, mission, strategic goals and priorities.

E. Office of Sports Information

The Office of Sports Information is responsible for publicizing information regarding FAMU's intercollegiate varsity athletic teams. On behalf of the Department of Athletics, the Office of Sports Information is responsible for maintaining and distributing all publications, news releases, web pages, social media, photography, videography, and statistical data concerning the University's athletic teams and programs. The Office of Sports Information also serves as the department's contact for the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Southwestern Athletic Conference. The Sports Information Director shall ensure compliance with FAMU's communications policy, style guide and strategic priorities and goals, including athletic marketing and publications.

V. Public Records

- A. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") and the Florida Public Records Act, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, University employees must provide documents or information in response to a public records or FOIA request, subject to the Office of the General Counsel's review, management, and direction in conformance with state and federal laws.
- B. Employees shall immediately notify and consult with the Office of the General Counsel before responding to a public records or FOIA request or releasing any information or documents that contain student records or information, pursuant to FERPA and [Student Education Records-BOT Policy Number 2017-02](#).
- C. Upon receipt of a public records or FOIA request—either written or verbal—the University must: (i) promptly acknowledge the request; (ii) undertake reasonable efforts to determine whether any of the requested records exist and, if so, from where and whom they can be obtained; and (iii) within a reasonable time, retrieve the records, redact any portions of the record that are exempt by law from public disclosure, and produce any responsive records to the requestor. After notifying and receiving direction from the Office of General Counsel regarding the records request, all custodians of potentially responsive records shall diligently collect and submit to the Public Records Officer within the Office of the General Counsel all such records for review and processing. If additional time is needed, promptly contact the Office of the General Counsel. Failure to timely respond to such requests within a reasonable time may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, as well as civil and/or criminal penalties.
- D. Employees shall promptly prepare and provide to the Public Records Officer within the Office of the General Counsel a reasonable estimate of the labor costs (calculated as total number of hours multiplied by the hourly rate of lowest-paid qualified employee capable of performing the required review) and materials costs (*i.e.*, copying costs) that will be required to locate and collect potentially responsive records. A standard template for such cost estimates is

available upon request by contacting publicrecords@famuedu. As the University may elect to produce electronic copies of the requested records, paper copies should not be made pending direction from the Office of General Counsel.

- E. All University business conducted by electronic correspondence must be conducted via the employee's assigned University email account to ensure documents and correspondence are preserved and accessible as required by law. All emails sent to or from an employee's assigned FAMU.edu account are subject to FOIA and the Florida Public Records Act and may also be subject to the Florida Government-in-the-Sunshine Act, Chapter 286, Florida Statutes. Information must also be collected, posted and distributed via University servers, such as: (i) Qualtrics for surveys, polls and assessments; and (ii) Canvas, Daily Venom, FAMU News, FAMU.edu, iStrike (or other approved University platforms) for internal announcements. Use of a private device—such as a personal smart phone, tablet, laptop or computer—to conduct University-related business could subject that device to inspection in search of University-related records.
- F. University-affiliated social media accounts are also subject to public records requests. Usernames and passwords for these accounts must be provided to the Office of Communications. For additional information, please review the related [Social Media Policy UP-01-05](#).
- G. Please note that social media accounts connected to the University must also be archived to ensure they can be retrieved for information requests or legal matters. Deleted social media content must also be stored in an accessible manner. Contact the Office of Communications at 850-599-3413 for further information on these requirements.

VI. Advertising

- A. The Office of Communications must review and approve (or disapprove), in advance, all proposed advertising from all University departments/units, including, but not limited to, all print, broadcast, billboard, digital, social media and radio ads, as well as student-recruitment, marketing, informational, and fund-raising videos.
- B. Additionally, any banners and promotional items (*i.e.*, t-shirts, pens, posters, hats, bags, *etc.*) and social media and digital ads/videos (*i.e.*, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, Pandora, Spotify, Vimeo, *etc.*) must be reviewed and approved (or disapproved) in advance, by the Office of Communications. Personnel ads are not required to be approved by the Office of Communications but must comply with the University Brand Guidelines before publication via the Office of Human Resources.
- C. All advertisements, publications, digital and visual marketing must only use University-issued phone numbers, email addresses and the Office of Communications/Information Technology Services-approved website links. Websites must be reviewed and approved (or disapproved), in advance, by the University's Web Council in conjunction with the University Webmaster and the Office of Communications.
- D. All University departments/units and special committees must establish a marketing budget for each academic year to cover the costs of all proposed advertising, marketing materials, and associated printing. All marketing materials must be developed in compliance with the University's mission, strategic plan, style guide and SACSCOC accreditation standards.

VII. Uses of Likeness, Filming, External Marketing Services

- A. No advertisement, publication, and digital/visual marketing material shall include the University's name or likeness unless approved, in advance, by the Office of Communications. University names, logos and images are the property of the University and may not be altered in any way. Any use of fonts, colors, or artwork that are similar to official University fonts, colors, or artwork is strictly prohibited, including, without limitation, any uses that may cause confusion regarding the source, connection, or approval of goods/services by the University.
- B. All approved advertisements, publications, and digital/visual marketing materials must display a written notice of approval by the Office of Communications before being posted on campus or appearing in any University or external/community publications, *etc.*
- C. The Office of Communications shall review and approve (or disapprove) any University-related filming prior to the scheduling or commencement of the filming. All edited or any raw video must be submitted to the Office of Communications for review before it is disseminated or posted online.
- D. Any University department/unit or employee seeking to procure external marketing services must first obtain the written approval of the Office of Communications and submit to the Office of Procurement the proposed marketing agreement and other required documentation.
- E. No individuals, groups or organizations may use the University's name or likeness or produce content or events on behalf of the University, without first obtaining the written pre-approval of the Office of Communications. This requirement excludes University-sanctioned student activities and publications.
- F. Requests for review of proposed advertisements, videos, media content, or events shall be submitted via the Office of Communications' Service Request Form, which is available on the "Communications" webpage located at [FAMU Office of Communications Project Request Form](#).

VIII. Photographic Services

University officials and students who desire photographs for University-related activities must receive written pre-approval from the Office of Communications. No later than seven (7) business days before the planned activity, a request for photographic services must be submitted to the Office of Communications via a Project Request Form, which is available on the "Communications" webpage located at [FAMU Office of Communications Project Request Form](#).

IX. Publications & Style Requirements

- A. All publications—including, without limitation, all print, website and social media publications—intended for dissemination on a FAMU campus or externally, as well as promotional documents, must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Office of Communications to ensure all publications relating to the University demonstrate consistent messaging and imagery. The Office of Communications will review materials for conformance with this Policy and the University's Style, Publication & Media Guide, now in effect or as

amended. These guidelines also apply to official University websites and social media channels.

- B. All internal and external communications, including communications by a University Direct Support Organization (“DSO”), must strictly adhere to this Policy and the University’s Style, Publication & Media Guide, now in effect or as amended. Exceptions include publications edited and produced by students, flyers or posters for University-sanctioned events funded by student activities fees, internal office correspondence, faculty works, textbooks, and materials for classroom use.
- C. The Office of Communications provides pertinent information about Florida A&M University, its purpose, objectives, programs of instruction, public services, and information for prospective students, faculty and staff. University publications include, without limitation, catalogs, schedules, reports, handbooks, manuals, brochures, recruitment materials, directories, and other general information documents.
- D. The Office of Communications is charged and entrusted with controlling all institutional publications involving the use of the University’s name, seal, or logos. This responsibility is carried out primarily through a University Identity Program, which establishes strict editorial style, typography and graphic standards, including the use of the FAMU shield and seal for all publications.

X. Uses of the University Seal, Trademarks, Logos and Copyrighted Materials

- A. The official University seal shall not be used for general branding, marketing, communications or promotional purposes. It is restricted for use on official documents, such as diplomas, transcripts, legal documents, Board of Trustees’ reports, resolutions and proclamations, commencement and convocation documents, and official University communications (*i.e.*, letterhead, business cards, email signature blocks, *etc.*). The seal shall only be released for publication by the Office of Communications and shall not be downloaded or copied from the internet for use in any non-official University-related communication. The presence of the seal authenticates publications as an official document from the University. The Office of Communications must review and pre-approve any use of the University’s logos and seal.
- B. The University Block Logo, "Excellence With Caring" motto, institutional logos, "Rattler" and "FAMU" may be used in publications requiring a symbol of identity, such as catalogs, handbooks, brochures, programs, flyers, invitations, bookmarks, posters and paraphernalia. Generally, one logo per publication is sufficient. Individual departments must consult the Office of Communications about proposed publication designs.
- C. ***No FAMU employee or other person shall: (i) violate the University’s rights in its official seal, trademarks, logos or copyrights through the sale, offer for sale, manufacture, or distribution of goods or services; (ii) make any statements or representation whatsoever, or use any false designation of origin or false description, or perform any act, which is likely to lead members of the public to believe that any service or product being manufactured, distributed, produced or sold is in any way associated or connected with FAMU, or licensed, sponsored, approved, or authorized by FAMU; or (iii) commit or undertake any action which constitutes an infringement of the University’s official seal, trademarks, logos, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights. Any violation of this section may subject the violator***

(and those acting in concert therewith) to civil and/or criminal liability to the fullest extent of all applicable federal and state laws.

D. **Requests for Use of the University's official seal, trademarks, logos, copyrights or other intellectual property**

Requests for access to or use of the University's official seal, trademarks, logos, copyrights, or other intellectual property shall be submitted in writing to the Office of Communications for review and approval (or disapproval). Scanned or modified versions of Florida A&M University logos shall never be used and are in direct violation of this Policy.

XI. **Official FAMU Colors**

The official colors of Florida A&M University are orange (Pantone Matching System 1595 C) and green (Pantone Matching System 357 C). The accessibility compliant orange color is #CC4E00 for digital work. These specifications apply to all print, video, and electronic materials and media. Please see the University's Style, Publication & Media Guide for additional information.

The University's official colors shall not be used to convey any false designation of origin or false description that is likely to lead members of the public to believe that any service or product being manufactured, distributed, produced, or sold is in any way associated or connected with FAMU, or licensed, sponsored, approved, or authorized by FAMU.

XII. **University Listings**

A. The **acceptable** listings for Florida A&M University are only as follows:

1. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (formal, used for invitations, letterhead, etc.);
2. Florida A&M University (used with no spaces between A&M); or
3. FAMU.

B. **Unacceptable** listings include:

1. Florida A and M University;
2. Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University;
3. Florida A. and M. University;
4. F.A.M.U.;
5. A. & M.; and
6. A & M.

XIII. **Off-Campus Print Jobs**

- A. Large print jobs may require off-campus printing for quality and time efficiency. The Office of Communications is responsible for ensuring that all publications conform with this Policy and the University's Style, Publication & Media Guide. Therefore, all University departments/units and employees are encouraged to consult with the Office of Communications before seeking outside printing services and must submit

requests for outside printing with the supporting proposed agreement to the Office of Communications for review and approval (or disapproval) before engaging the outside printer vendor.

- B. All University departments/units and employees shall obtain a minimum of three (3) written price quotes from selected outside printer vendors in accordance with University procurement policies and must obtain written pre-approval from the Office of Communications and the Office of Procurement prior to selecting and engaging a vendor.

XIV. Letterhead, Envelopes, and Business Cards

All University letterhead, envelopes, and business cards are standardized to provide brand consistency. The Office of Communications is responsible for enforcing the University's brand identity. A standard format has been established for University letterhead, envelopes and business cards. All University departments/units shall only use the standard format. The Office of Communications will help prepare specifications upon request.

A. Letterhead

Letterhead may not be personalized. The names of departments as they appear on stationery are strictly controlled by the University. Departments/units must request and receive pre-approval of any proposed changes or additions through the Office of Communications.

B. Business Cards

University business cards include the employee's name, title, position, business address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. University personnel seeking to purchase business cards should consult with staff in the Office of Communications and campus print shop for assistance.

XV. Required Statement of Cost

- A. All FAMU publications costing in excess of \$15,000.00 that are not University-related working documents (*e.g.*, documents used in the normal scope of work, such as test papers, office forms, general correspondence, *etc.*) shall include the following statement of cost and purpose:

This public document was promulgated at a total cost of \$_____, or \$_____ per copy, for the purpose of [insert statement of document's purpose].

- B. This statement shall be displayed in a conspicuous manner, enclosed in a two-point box and be the same font size as the body type of the publication. Suggested placement locations are inside the document's front cover, inside back cover, or on the first page.

XVI. Restrictive Printing

Materials for use in lotteries, raffles or other regulated games of chance will be produced only after appropriate written authorization has been granted and presented to the Office of

Communications. All University departments/units and employees seeking to use copyrighted materials must provide written authorization from the copyright owner. The Office of Communications will verify such authorization prior to approving any use of copyrighted materials.

XVII. Implementation

The President, in consultation with the Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, shall establish all necessary policies and procedures required to implement and enforce this Policy in an efficient and effective manner.

XVIII. Administration

The Office of Communications shall be responsible for administering and enforcing this Policy in coordination with the Office of Procurement and the Office of General Counsel, as appropriate.

XIX. Reservation of Rights

The Board of Trustees reserves all rights, to the fullest extent available under all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, to amend this Communications Policy, which shall take effect on the date specified in such amendment(s).

Attachment(s)	
Related Resource(s)	UP-01-05-Social Media Policy University's Style, Publication & Media Guide