

Media Relations

Policy CR006

Responsible Office: Communications and External Relations

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Communications and External Relations

Issue Date: September 2018

Policy Statement

Outside media coverage of the college occurs both on and off the FIT campus on a regular basis. As a result, public perception and understanding of the brand and public image of the college are highly influenced by the media.

This policy provides procedures that members of the FIT community must take prior to FIT-related interactions with the media. It also clarifies the role of the Media Relations unit of FIT's Communications and External Relations Division, both with the media and the college community. This policy will help ensure the integrity of FIT's brand, image, and reputation; that media outreach and contact is coordinated to serve the best interests of the college; that the academic environment is not unduly disrupted; that recordings are made with any necessary documentable releases and consents by those being filmed, photographed, or spoken to; that appropriate location agreements and certificates of insurance are secured when required by FIT's Office of General Counsel.

Employees and students, other college-affiliated individuals, and all external parties, including media, must work directly with the Media Relations (MR) unit of Communications and External Relations (CER) before planning, approving, or carrying out any interactions with the media.

Reason for the Policy

This policy promotes accurate and effective communication with the media while protecting the college's mission, strategic plan, reputation, messaging, and overall brand. The policy ensures that FIT is represented with a consistent message and provides specifications regarding interaction and communication with the media.

Who Should Read this Policy

- All members of the FIT community—administrators, faculty, staff, and students
- All members of the media, including editors, reporters, videographers, and Photographers
- All third parties and/or partners working with the college, especially those who wish to conduct media outreach and/or conduct interviews, videography, photography, and/or audio recordings for their own purposes

Who is Affected by this Policy

- Division of Communications and External Relations

Definitions

- **Certificate of insurance:** General liability insurance, or other insurance as appropriate, that protects the college from claims, including but not limited to claims for bodily injury, associated medical costs, and damage to property.
- **Commercial shoots:** Movies, television shows, digital content, commercials, advertisements, editorial site locations, and other video or photo shoots that are for commercial purposes, in whole or in part.
- **FIT partners:** Any third party with which the college has a relationship, including but not limited to, contest sponsors, program, and/or course sponsors, research partners, architects, caterers, contractors, guest lecturers, and performers.
- **Identification and establishing shots:** Any interior or exterior image that identifies the college by name, signage, logo, identifiable building or other identifiable imaging thereby visually establishing the photograph or video image as associated with FIT.
- **Institutional shoots:** Videography or photography done on behalf of the college.
- **Location agreement:** A legal contract between FIT and a third party specifying the terms and conditions of filming, photographing, or other media-related activity, including restrictions on the use of FIT property.
- **Media alert:** A one-page information sheet about an event that includes details about the event.
- **News media:** Journalists, photographers, videographers, and editors who report for media outlets that report news and cover media-worthy events.
- **Pitches:** An email or phone call offering a news story to a journalist or editor at a media outlet.
- **Press release:** A written announcement issued to news media about a matter of public interest.
- **Release:** A legal document, signed and dated, defining and granting use of image(s).
- **Spokesperson(s):** Individuals designated by CER to speak on behalf of the college.

Principles

The Division of Communications and External Relations (CER) at FIT represents the college and its community to news media. The Media Relations unit of CER acts as the designated contact point for all requests from, and interactions with, members of the media for interviews, filming, photography, and audio recording that is in any way related to the campus, and/or any member of the FIT community as it relates to that person's role at the college. All media requests must be reviewed by CER in order to evaluate the benefit to the college and members of its community, prevent the disruption of college operations, and ensure compatibility with FIT's mission, strategic plan, messaging, and brand.

The Media Relations office of CER further conducts proactive outreach to media to seek coverage that benefits the college and is in line with the college's mission, strategic plan, messaging, and brand priorities. To this end, the Media Relations unit works closely and cooperatively with members of the FIT community to identify stories, and gather facts and information.

CER acts as the official spokesperson for the college. During emergency situations on campus and/or that affect the FIT community, interactions with the media are coordinated by the vice president for Communications and External Relations and/or the executive director of Public and Media Relations.

Responsibilities

The Media Relations office evaluates and oversees all media requests, including but not limited to:

- Media outlets that report news in any format;
- Print publications of all kinds;
- Digital outlets of all kinds;
- Television programs of all kinds;
- Radio, podcasts, and all other audio outlets; and
- Any commercial shoots in which FIT will be identified, directly or indirectly (Commercial shoots in which FIT will not be identified are handled by Event Management and Facilities Rental).

The Media Relations office is additionally responsible for the following as it pertains to media:

- All information distributed to media, including but not limited to, press releases, media alerts, pitches, photographs, video, and invitations;
- Proactive outreach and responsive communications with media;
- Discussions, verbally and/or in writing, about subject matter;
- Securing and approving locations, including anywhere inside FIT buildings/residence halls; FIT's exterior campus and locations bounded by Seventh Avenue and Eighth Avenue on 27 Street; and the residence hall located on West 31 Street and its exterior environs, are included. Additionally, off-campus sites where members of the FIT community and/or FIT-related work are videotaped, photographed, and/or audiotaped; Filming and photography are expressly forbidden under any circumstances in locations considered to be private, such as restrooms, locker rooms, and dressing rooms;
- Identification and designation of spokespeople, if other than CER;
- Securing, in cooperation with FIT's Office of General Counsel, necessary location agreements, certificates of liability insurance, and releases; and
- Accompanying media during their time on campus.

Procedures

- **For Media and Other External Parties**

- **News Media**

Members of the news media who want to interview members of the FIT community, including students who will be identified as such, and/or film, videotape, audiotape, and/or photograph at FIT must make such requests to the Media Relations office.

All interviews with FIT employees must be scheduled in advance with the consent of the Media Relations office.

- **Campus Visits By Media**

Members of the media cannot be on FIT property or in FIT buildings without being signed in and escorted by a staff member of the Media Relations office. No other FIT employee and no students can sign in and escort members of the media without prior approval by Media Relations.

If a member of the media arrives on campus unannounced, an FIT Public Safety officer must call Media Relations and have the visitor wait until a Media Relations staff member arrives and/or approves the visitor for entry.

Members of the media can, by law, stand on the public streets and sidewalks outside of the college's buildings. However, should a Public Safety officer observe a member of the media taking photographs, shooting video, and/or speaking with FIT students and employees, a call should be immediately made to the Media Relations office so that a professional in that office can investigate and/or assist the media.

- **Photographers, Videographers, Filmmakers, and Others**

Commercial filming, videography, photography, and audio taping should be treated in accord with the college's Filming, Photography, and Audio Policy.

- **FIT Partners, Sponsors, and Other Third Parties**

Any third party with which the college has a relationship, including but not limited to, contest sponsors, program and/or course sponsors and partners, research sponsors and partners, guest lecturers, performers, architects, contractors, and contractors who want to issue a press release or otherwise pitch the media and/or invite media to an event, and/or videotape and/or photograph and/or audio tape in relation to their work with FIT must contact the Media Relations office for approval. Reasonable time must be given for review, approval, and arrangements. Such requests must include:

- Detailed description of the project
- Company name, address, and contact information
- Name and contact information
- Location(s) requested
- Date(s) and time(s), from arrival to departure
- Number of people and their roles
- Intended usage

Requests for interviews, photography, filming, and audio taping shall be discussed with other stakeholders at the college as appropriate and relevant. Permission will be granted at the discretion of Media Relations. It cannot unduly disrupt academic activity and student life. Script approval may be required. FIT support services, such as Public Safety and technicians, may be mandated by the college in its discretion and paid for by the third party. Cancellation fees will apply. For a fee schedule, visit <http://www.fitnyc.edu/facilities-rental/rates.php>. All credits and references to the college will be reviewed by the Media Relations office and approved or denied in advance of shooting.

Any FIT employee who, in connection with their status as a member of the FIT community, receives a media request from a third party (or who wishes to initiate contact with third-party media) must first coordinate with CER's Office of Media Relations.

Photographers, videographers, and others capturing activity at FIT cannot be on FIT property or in FIT buildings without being signed in and escorted by a staff member of the Media Relations office. No other FIT employee and no students can sign in and escort members of the media without prior approval by Media Relations.

- **For FIT Employees, Students, and Independent Contractors**

- **Media Requests Directed to FIT Employees, Students, and Independent Contractors**

Any member of the FIT community or any independent contractor who receives a media request from a third party (or who wishes to initiate contact with third-party media) must first coordinate with the Media Relations office. The FIT community member must request that the media communicate directly with the Media Relations office. If the media contact communicates by phone, the FIT community member should also get the media contact's name, media outlet, phone number, and email and send this information to the Media Relations office. The Media Relations office reviews and vets all media requests to determine the value of each request as it contributes to the college's mission, strategic plan, messaging, and brand.

When an employee is expressing an individual viewpoint through such vehicles as a letter to the editor, opinion piece, or blog post, for example, coordinating with CER is not necessary. However, it is a violation of this policy to state or imply that any personal views expressed in any way represent the views of, or are endorsed by, the college.

- **Pro-Active Media Outreach Conducted by FIT**

The Media Relations office is solely authorized to conduct proactive outreach to the media. No press releases, media alerts, invitations, or other outreach may be sent to media by anyone other than a staff member of Media Relations.

Members of the FIT community who have a project, event, or news of potential interest to the media must contact the Media Relations office. If the project, event, or news is considered by Media Relations to be of potential interest to the media and of benefit to the college's goals, Office personnel will help develop the story and pitch it to media. Before contacting Media Relations for this purpose, faculty must get approval from the

department chair and dean. Other employees must get sign off from a supervisor and vice president.

Email is the preferable form of contact with Media Relations. Emails should fully explain the project, event, or news, providing the title, a short narrative, and, if applicable, short bios, date, time, location, cost, and how to register. If the event is open to the public, this also should be noted.

- **Spokespersons**

When public comment on behalf of the college is requested, a spokesperson will be identified by the vice president for CER and/or the executive director of Public and Media Relations, usually in consultation with the Office of the President and/or members of the FIT Cabinet. FIT employees cannot represent themselves as speaking for the college unless authorized to do so by the vice president for CER and/or the executive director of Public and Media Relations.

The above also holds true during emergency situations that affect the campus and the FIT community. During a crisis or incident that disrupts normal college activities, the college has procedures in place to communicate with faculty, staff, students, and members of the media and public as necessary.

Under no circumstances should information pertaining to any legal or administrative matter be discussed publicly without the prior written approval of the Office of the General Counsel and the Media Relations office.

- **International Campuses**

The leadership and communications staff of the college's campuses in Italy and Korea should use best practices and judgment in evaluating and handling media requests. The Media Relations office encourages those campuses to seek the expertise of Media Relations in dealing with the media.

Violations

- N/A

Related Policies

- [Blogging](#)
- [Campus Safety and Security](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [FERPA](#)
- [Filming, Photography, and Audio](#)
- [Fire Safety](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects](#)

Related Documents

- N/A

Contacts

- **Executive Director of Communications and External Relations**
Business and Liberal Arts Center, B905
(212) 217-4700