



MEDIA POLICY

Scope: Residential Life

Issued : June 1, 2012

Revised: June 15, 2015

I. Purpose

The Department of Residential Life benefits from acting in an open environment where policies, procedures, and other information are disseminated to the public in an accurate, timely, and orderly manner. The Department is therefore committed to cooperating with all interested publics, including the media, by providing appropriate information about services, activities, issues, and incidents which occur in campus residential facilities.

II. Policy

To ensure proper and equal access to Residential Life Information, the following guidelines are adopted for contact with the media:

RESTRICTED INFORMATION

A. Information Not For Release

As a staff member, you shall not release: (1) information about students protected under the Buckley Amendment, (2) personnel information about employees, and (3) other information protected by state and federal legislation.

B. Directory Information

Under the Buckley Amendment, you may release “directory information” about a student unless that student has specifically asked that it be withheld. The university has interpreted “directory information” to include: name, class and college, local and permanent addresses, and local telephone number. If the student has filed a request with the Office of the Registrar, a warning message will appear on all computer screens and printed lists, and the directory information shall not be released.

C. Local Phone Numbers

For security reasons, Residential Life staff members may release the local phone number of a current resident only after that student’s full name is supplied by the person requesting information.

D. Information About Crimes

Information about actual, alleged, or possible crimes under investigation in residential facilities shall be released only by the LSU Police Department.

ISSUANCE OF NEWS RELEASES

A. Routine News Releases

The Office of Communications & University Relations prepares and distributes news releases in support of planned divisional or area activities and in response to newsworthy events. The Executive Director or the Associate Director of Communications & Development refers and schedules interviews with contacts other than designated spokespersons within the Department of Residential Life. The Executive Director or Associate Director of Communications & Development will apprise the Office of Communications & University Relations of activities involving off-campus media.

B. Non-Routine/Crisis Statements and News Releases

Non-routine/crisis statements may be prepared by the Executive Director of Residential Life and the Associate Director of Communications & Development in conjunction with the Office of Communications & University Relations. If you are contacted by media representatives for information regarding crisis or emergency situations, you should refer them to the Executive Director or your Director. If you are unable to determine if an event or situation is of a non-routine or crisis nature you should consult with your supervisor or your Director. Staff members in the Office of Communications & University Relations may be contacted at any time you have questions.

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Department of Residential Life supports the establishment of cooperative relationships with media representatives which include students (Reveille, Tiger Weekly, KLSU, Tiger-TV, Legacy, and Gumbo) as well as full-time news media professionals. You are expected to be professional and courteous to media representatives, and many times that may take the form of referring the media representative to the appropriate spokesperson within the Department.

A. Spokespersons

On occasion, you may be approached by a member of the media. This is more likely if there is an urgent issue in the residence halls such as a crime, fire, or other crisis. You may also be questioned about more routine concerns or stories of general interest. Following are basic expectations in dealing with the media:

1. In general, the Executive Director and/or Associate Director of Communications & Development are the official spokespersons for the Department and you should feel comfortable in referring all media inquiries to them. Inquiries related to crisis or emergency situations should always be referred to them. (In their absence you may refer inquiries to the

Director for Residential Life & Education, the Director for Housing, or the Assistant/Associate Directors).

2. If you decide to speak with a reporter regarding a non-emergency situation, it is important to remember that you are speaking in your role as a staff member of the Department of Residential Life. This places different responsibilities on you than if you were only a resident. Be sure to consider the following:
 - a. Never release information you believe to be or have been told is confidential.
 - b. **Your represent LSU.** Even though you may be discussing your own experiences, you will be identified as an LSU staff member, so you are representing the university. This is not an appropriate time to air your disagreements with Residential Life. Any such disagreements should be discussed with the Residential Life staff followed by appropriate avenues of appeal on campus if necessary.
 - c. **Be prepared.** Find out what the interview is about and be prepared to discuss the topic.
 - d. **If you don't know, say so.** It's okay to tell a reporter you don't know the answer to a question. Offer to find out and get back to them, or refer them to the Executive Director of Residential Life or Associate Director of Communications & Development. Don't speculate, make up an answer that could turn out to be incorrect, or say "no comment."
 - e. **Always be professional and polite.** Anything you say or do can be quoted by the reporter, so don't forget that you are always "on the record." You may politely end a conversation with a reporter at any time even though you initially answered questions.
 - f. If you speak with a reporter, be sure to let your immediate supervisor know so that he/she can inform the Executive Director.

B. Media Access

Ideally, media representatives should prearrange access needs with the Executive Director or Associate Director of Communications & Development prior to accessing residence halls or university apartments. If prearrangements have not been made, you should immediately contact the Director, the appropriate Assistant Director, Residence Life Coordinator or Resident Manager who will contact the media representatives to determine if the reporter's needs can be met within the established policies and procedures. The Executive Director or Associate Director of Communications & Development should be notified about media in residence hall areas or apartments and should be contacted for consultation and assistance, if needed.

Residence hall public spaces are considered accessible to the general public, which includes media representatives. These public areas are those areas not behind the first level of security of our communities. For example, media may set up and film outside of residence halls on public property, but may not interfere with the regular operations in these areas or "harass" residents or staff.

Students' living areas, including student rooms, apartments, hallways, stairwells, restrooms, common areas, and floor or section lounges, are not accessible to the general public or the media.

Only residents and their guests are permitted in these areas. Guests must follow the Guest Visitation Policy to be in these areas. You should immediately call the LSU Police Department if others are in student living areas. Anyone breaching security in these areas should be warned for trespassing by the LSU Police Department so an official record of the unauthorized entry is kept.

Media representatives may enter main lobby areas or front desk areas seeking assistance, but may not remain in the areas unescorted. They may only film in these more public areas of the halls with a Residential Life staff escort, or as the registered guest of a resident.

C. Media Credentials

Media credentials serve as identification only. **YOU SHOULD NOT GRANT SPECIAL ACCESS OR INFORMATION PRIVILEGES TO AN INDIVIDUAL BECAUSE OF HIS/HER IDENTIFICATION AS A MEMBER OF THE MEDIA.**

The safety, confidentiality, and privacy needs of the community members come first, and students and staff must not be overwhelmed by media representatives showing credentials or carrying video cameras and microphones. Media should never be allowed access and escort into student living areas

Students who are approached by the media in public spaces have the option of talking with representatives or not talking with them depending on their level of comfort. Contact the Associate Director of Communications & Development or the Office of Communications & University Relations if you have any questions regarding media credentials.

D. Athletes

All policies related to access for the media to residential facilities apply in areas that house athletes. If you receive a request for an interview with an athlete or an inquiry regarding Athletic Department issues and activities, refer that person to the Media Relations and Sports Information Office Associate Athletic Director for Public Relations at 578-8226.