



Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 268 – Revision 1

To: All Virginia Tech Employees
From: Timothy D. Sands
Date: February 16, 2023
Subject: Communication with Government Officials

Reason for Policy

This policy establishes a structure for communication and engagement with federal, state, and local government officials. The policy is intended to help the university maintain one voice in communications with government officials to ensure that the university's message and priorities are presented most effectively.

Policy Statement

The President is responsible for approving all university positions on federal, state, and local legislation and regulations. The President is also responsible for engagement with government officials and their staffs at all levels of government and with candidates for public office and their staffs. The President is responsible for all communication with government officials concerning official university positions on policy issues. The Office of Government & Community Relations works closely with the President on these responsibilities.

The university's policy on communication with government officials in no way restricts the right of any employee. However, when communicating personal opinions, it is the affirmative responsibility of all employees not to represent their personal opinions as positions or policies of the university, unless the President has specifically authorized them to do so.

Federal Government

The Vice President for Government & Community Relations oversees all federal relations. This office coordinates all presentations to Congressional offices, Congressional committees, and letters and electronic communications to federal elected officials and their staffs on behalf of the university concerning policy or funding issues. Requests for meetings with Members of Congress or with Congressional staff to discuss funding requests or policies affecting the university are the responsibility of the Office of Government & Community Relations in coordination with the President. In the event that a university faculty or staff member is contacted by a Member of Congress or Congressional staff to testify before a Congressional committee or otherwise engage with the Congress with regard to their expertise, such faculty and staff should notify and coordinate with the Office of Government & Community Relations. Faculty and staff must note that their testimonies do not represent the official position of the university, unless otherwise authorized by the President.

State Government

State law and directives from the Office of the Governor require the university to designate official spokespersons to communicate its positions to the General Assembly and to coordinate its legislative proposals through the Governor's Cabinet Secretaries. The university President and others specifically designated by the President are authorized spokespersons. The Vice President for Government & Community Relations oversees all state legislative relations. This office coordinates all presentations to legislators, legislative committees, and letters and electronic communications to elected officials on behalf of the university concerning policy or funding issues. This office works with the President to lead relations with the Governor's Office, General Assembly, Cabinet Secretaries, State agencies, and legislative staff and works closely with our Vice Presidents, Deans, Departmental Chairs, and faculty members to ensure coordination. In the event that a university faculty or staff member is contacted by a Member or staff of the General Assembly to testify before a committee or otherwise engage with the General Assembly with regard to their expertise, such faculty and staff should notify and coordinate with the Office of Government & Community Relations. Faculty and staff must note that their testimonies do not represent the official position of the university, unless otherwise authorized by the President.

Local Government

This policy recognizes that many staff, administrators, and faculty have existing relationships with local government officials, both personally and on behalf of the university. Nothing in this document prohibits or is intended to discourage such engagements. Interactions and engagements with local officials on behalf of the university should be coordinated with the Office of Government & Community Relations.

Campus Visits and Invitations

Visits to university facilities and attendance at university events and programs by elected and appointed officials and their staff members or candidates for public office are an important part of government relations efforts and are encouraged. Invitations to elected officials and Cabinet members should be extended by the President of the university, and all invitations to these officials shall be led by the Office of Government & Community Relations. All requests from elected officials to participate in Virginia Tech events or programs shall be directed to the Office of Government & Community Relations, which shall engage the university President.

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Original policy was approved by President Charles W. Steger on October 12, 2010, upon recommendation of the Academic Council.

Note: Titles and contact information for the Office of Government & Community Relations were updated February 11, 2022.

Revision 1- Following discussion with President's Council on October 20, 2022, Revision 1 was approved by President Timothy D. Sands on February 16, 2023, effective immediately.