I. **INTRODUCTION (Purpose and Intent)**

The USF Office of University Communications & Marketing has primary responsibility for the coordination of the University of South Florida System (“USF System”) public relations program. This Policy/Procedure covers such public relations activities as media relations, University events, radio/TV appearances and public speaking engagements.

Decentralized public relations offices in institutions, campuses, colleges, and special units work within these guidelines and the policy leadership of the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing. Faculty of the USF System are encouraged to discuss their areas of expertise in public media. This Policy is intended to govern official statements of the USF System.

II. **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. **Media Relations**

All official news and information communicated to the news media by the USF System as "official" news releases, statements, tips, and reports, shall be initiated and approved in advance by the USF Office of University Communications & Marketing. These communications must be authorized and sanctioned by the USF System President, Vice President for University Communications & Marketing, or designee(s).
News and information pertaining to the internal programs of a department, school, college, division, or campus that do not violate the definition and spirit of "official" University news and information may be communicated to the news media by the unit itself. Copies should be provided to the USF Office of University Communications & Marketing at the same time such information is provided to the news media. USF System employees are encouraged to respond to routine requests for factual information by identified news representatives where the requested information is within the employee's area of responsibility and release of the information is timely and appropriate.

In those cases where an employee is asked to comment as a representative of the USF System on an official USF System policy or position on an issue, prior approval should be received from the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing or designee(s) or the appropriate cabinet-level vice president.

B. **News Conferences**

All official USF System-wide news conferences are to be planned, coordinated, and arranged through the Office of University Communications & Marketing. The necessity and appropriateness of all news conferences shall be determined by the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing or designee(s).

C. **Editorial/Management Board Meetings**

All official meetings between USF System representatives and editorial or management boards of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations are to be planned and coordinated through the Office of University Communications & Marketing. The necessity and appropriateness of all meetings with such boards shall be determined by the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing. Faculty may discuss issues within their field of expertise without prior approval by the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing, or designee(s).

D. **Radio and Television Appearances**
All employees are encouraged to respond to print and online interview requests and to appear on radio and television news and talk programs to discuss their areas of expertise. The Office of University Communications & Marketing should be notified of all such appearances. In those cases where an employee is asked to appear as an official representative of the USF System to comment on an official USF System policy or position on an issue, prior approval should be received from the USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing or designee(s) or the appropriate cabinet-level vice president.

E. Honoraria

The USF System has no formal policy concerning honoraria. However, the following guidelines are suggested:

1. Speaking engagements concerning a topic within the speaker's area of expertise may be compensated for, with the amount dependent upon preparation and travel time and the resources and procedures of the requesting organization. Under the "public service" role of the USF System, however, USF System speakers are encouraged not to request an honorarium from civic and non-profit groups.

2. Engagements on the topic of the USF System itself are considered a service for which no honorarium should normally be accepted.

F. Official USF System Spokesperson

The USF System Vice President for University Communications & Marketing or designee shall be the official USF System spokesperson. In “crisis” situations, the official USF System spokesperson or designee shall have sole authority for making statements about the USF System’s “position” concerning the “crisis.” The USF Office of Public Safety is responsible for dissemination of emergency management/police information and alerts.

*Current Responsible Office: Communications and Marketing*
*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.