



# Media Communications Policy

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## I. Purpose

The purpose of the Media Communications Policy (Policy) is to ensure that ACERA's responses to media inquiries are communicated through an authorized, informed representative to legitimate media representatives; reflects the organizational and Board of Retirement positions and policies; are timely, accurate and consistent; and do not disclose privileged, confidential, inaccurate, or inappropriate information.

## II. Assumptions

- A. ACERA, as a public retirement system, that generates public interest and therefore periodically receives inquiries from the media.
- B. The Board as fiduciary must protect the integrity of the system which includes the dissemination of accurate, appropriate, non-confidential information and non-proprietary information to the public.
- C. Requests from the news media will be given high priority and responded to quickly and efficiently.
- D. Inaccurate and/or unreliable information could harm ACERA's reputation and expose ACERA to liability for privacy, tort or defamation claims, breach of fiduciary duty, contract or other claims.
- E. This policy applies to ACERA employees, all staff hired on temporary basis or as independent contractors. The Trustee Communication Policy provides guidance for Trustee communications with the media.

### III. Assumptions & Principles

- A. The CEO or his/her Designee is the official spokesperson for ACERA and conveys the official ACERA position on issues.
- B. One informed and accurate message will be presented to the media.
- C. Media requests will be handled in a prompt and professional manner.
- D. Any media requests will be directed to the CEO or his/her Designee immediately.
- E. Staff is not authorized to speak on behalf of ACERA. Upon receiving a media inquiry, Staff will inform the media contact that the inquiry will be referred to the CEO or his/her Designee for response. Staff will immediately report the media inquiry to the CEO or his/her Designee identifying the name of the media contact, the name of the media source and the inquiry made. Staff will not disclose false, confidential, privileged, inappropriate or other non-disclosable information as detailed throughout this policy.
- F. When interviewed, or otherwise approached by the media for information concerning the affairs of ACERA, the CEO or his/her Designee shall attempt to review for accuracy any resulting materials that may be published, prior to their publication.
- G. Written press releases concerning the business of the ACERA Board shall be prepared by staff and shall be approved by the CEO or his/her Designee in consultation with the Board Chair.
- H. Personnel records or similar records contain private confidential information that is protected by Article 1, Section 1 of the California Constitution or other laws. Such records are exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act (Gov. Code §6254(c).) Personnel records generally include time records, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, marital status, phone numbers and other private information. Member records are confidential to the extent permitted by the law.
- I. Medical status, condition, and records, including psychiatric records and applications for disability, are also private and shall not be disclosed.

- J. The CEO or Designee shall refer to the Public Records Act upon any media request and shall protect records exempt from disclosure.

#### IV. Policy Review

The Governance Committee shall review this policy at least every three (3) years to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Board concerning any improvements or modifications it deems necessary.

#### V. Policy History

- A. The Board adopted this policy on April 21, 2011.
- B. The Board reviewed and adopted this policy, with revisions, on July 20, 2017<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Adoption date: April 21, 2011. Previous amendment dates, all with revisions: March 21, 2013; June 18, 2015; July 20, 2017.