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Communications  
Plan and Procedures  
Guide

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Great Basin College  
Communications Department

# Communications- Plan and Procedures Guide

## *Introduction*

A successful college image is much more than a logo; it includes everything we say about ourselves, how we present ourselves, how we treat students, and the images and words we use. All of these interactions are very important in shaping the public's perception of Great Basin College.

People form an opinion every time they view something that carries our image or hear the words "Great Basin College." If we put forth a positive, consistent image in our communications, our actions will match what we stand for, and Great Basin College's integrity and stature will continue to grow.

Great Basin College's image is built in accordance with college policy:

*The communications department is charged with the leadership and oversight of the college's public image and assuring the consistency and quality of that image in all college communications that reach internal and external audiences. This includes logos and marks, visual identity, style, usage, media relations, crisis communication, the college's web site, internal campus communication, campus distribution of mass email, community relations activities, displays, and signs.*

*The communications department shall develop standards, guidelines, and procedures necessary for the effective management of college communication efforts and shall routinely communicate these to college departments.*

This guide serves as a resource to the campus community to help work toward communications that are consistent and effective, as well as further enhance Great Basin College as a great place to learn, work, and live.

**Communications Department Contacts** – General email [communications@gbcnv.edu](mailto:communications@gbcnv.edu)

### ***Jennifer Sprout***

Director of Communications

775.327.2105

[jennifer.sprout@gbcnv.edu](mailto:jennifer.sprout@gbcnv.edu)

### ***Morgan Kaisershot***

Marketing and Social Media Specialist

775.327.2150

[morgan.kaisershot@gbcnv.edu](mailto:morgan.kaisershot@gbcnv.edu)

### ***Frank Sawyer***

Webmaster

775.327.2148

[frank.sawyer@gbcnv.edu](mailto:frank.sawyer@gbcnv.edu)

### ***Tasha Storla***

Admin Assistant III

775.327.2149

[tasha.storla@gbcnv.edu](mailto:tasha.storla@gbcnv.edu)

## **Media Relations**

Public awareness and support of GBC and its activities are enhanced through the maintenance of good working relationships with the media and public. The communications department strives to disseminate information in a cooperative and coordinated manner. GBC's media policy is based on a commitment to supply accurate, timely information for which the media and public have a just and reasonable claim.

*The Communications Department shall be responsible for contact with the news media, including creation and distribution of information relating to general college news or topics requiring an institutional response. Some designees may be authorized by the President's office or the Communications Department to distribute specific information to the media. News releases related to the college or its respective units shall be edited, approved and distributed by the Communications Department. News conferences shall be coordinated by or through the Communications Department.*

The College President, Vice Presidents, and the Director of Communications serve as spokespeople and convey the official college position on issues of general college-wide impact or significance or of a controversial or sensitive nature. Inquiries from the media regarding such issues should be immediately referred to the communications department. The President, Vice Presidents, or Director of Communications may designate another college representative to serve as a spokesperson when appropriate.

Faculty and staff are free to respond to requests from the media regarding their research, scholarship, teaching, or professional expertise. In such cases, faculty and staff are asked to notify the communications department to ensure a coordinated response if other college representatives are contacted on a similar issue. This also assists the communications department in building relationships with various media and highlighting the college's status.

Should a member of the media contact a faculty or staff member and ask to speak about GBC or matters related to the college, faculty, staff, or students, the inquiry should be referred to the communications department. The authorized spokespersons for GBC are:

***Joyce Helens***

President  
775.327.2108

***Jake Rivera***

Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs  
775.327.2116

***Sonja Sibert***

Vice President for Business Affairs  
775.327.2106

***Jennifer Sprout***

Director of Communications  
775.327.2105

## When a Reporter Calls

Guidelines for communicating with the media when issues are non-controversial and limited to the faculty or staff member's area of expertise:

- Obtain the name of the person calling, the media organization, all contact information, and, if available, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast.
- Notify the communications department with applicable information.
- Return all inquiries as soon as possible. Media outlets work on tight deadlines and will seek another source if calls are not returned.
- Do not feel compelled to conduct a phone interview or in-person interview. If you would like to think before answering, ask the reporter to email specific questions. In most instances, this will be acceptable to the reporter if you are providing information in a timely manner.
- Consult with the communications department prior to answering any inquiries: we are here to help. Answer only the questions that are asked. Do not elaborate. Do not speculate. It is okay not to know the answer to a question. Avoid “no comment,” as it has a negative connotation. Make sure the reporter understands your answers. In many cases, you are the expert educating the reporter, and, in turn, the media outlet's audience. Remember you are representing Great Basin College. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such. If you would like to do a “pre interview” please reach out to the communications department.
- There is no such thing as off the record. Expect that anything you say to a reporter will be printed.
- Provide your best contact information for follow-up questions.
- Issues that should not be discussed with reporters include legal issues, personnel issues, matters of college integrity, campus crises or emergency situations. Refer all such inquiries to the communications department.
- Any inquiries involving specific students are subject to FERPA regulations (see below) and should be directed to the communications department. **DO NOT RESPOND TO INQUIRIES RELATED TO STUDENTS, EVEN TO CONFIRM THAT THEY ARE A STUDENT.** See FERPA guidelines on the next page.
- Any inquiries involving specific faculty or staff members should be directed to the communications department or human resources.

## DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS AND DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records of both current and former students. Each NSHE institution is required to comply fully with the law. The Act makes a distinction between a student's education record and information classified as directory information. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer solely to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are defined as "eligible students" in the Act.

Education Records: Institutions must have written permission from the eligible student in order to release any personally identifiable information from a student's education record. However, under certain conditions FERPA allows institutions to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the institution;
- A student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided that the institution makes a reasonable attempt to notify the student in advance of compliance;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Directory Information: Under the provisions of FERPA, institutions may disclose, without consent, directory information to individuals upon request for enrolled and former students of the institution only. A disclosure of directory information is discretionary on the part of the institution.

By Nevada Revised Statutes NRS 396.535, "If the student does not return the form indicating that his or her personally identifiable information must not be released or disclosed, then it is probable that the information will be released or disclosed." Directory information is defined in the Act as information contained in an education record of a current or former student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The Nevada System of Higher Education designates the following as directory information for students: name; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; address; telephone number; weight and height of members of athletic teams; email address; degrees, honors, and awards received; major field of study; college; dates of attendance; dates of graduation; undergraduate or graduate status; most recent educational agency or institution attended; and enrollment status (full-time or part-time).

## Emergency Communication

Great Basin College has an emergency communication plan that is part of the college's larger emergency crisis plan. GBC's emergency crisis team works with the communications department to coordinate the release of all information to the media and other internal and external publics in the event of a major emergency.

In case of an emergency your first contact should be:

### ***Pat Anderson***

Director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Security  
775.327.2354

## Campus Communication/Mass Email

It is the policy of Great Basin College to coordinate mass emails to the entire campus through the communications department. If you have something to convey to faculty and staff, send your message through *The Weekly Post* or the electronic newsletter sent via email and published by the communications department that provides faculty and staff with a quick, easy-to-read look at campus news and special events each day.

To send a message through the communications department, the event or activity must be college-related or sponsored by a college-affiliated club or organization.

- Keep the message concise to increase readability
- Attachments can be included
- The Weekly Post* submissions must be made by 1 p.m. on Thursdays
- Newsletter submissions must be made by 5 p.m. on the 15th of each month
- Items must be submitted via email in a Word or text format to [communications@gbcnv.edu](mailto:communications@gbcnv.edu)

The communications department reserves the right to edit submissions. To keep the news fresh in *The Weekly Post*, items can appear a maximum of three times. Extras are used only for emergencies or events that occur after it has been distributed. It is not to fix errors or omissions.

Some messages regarding emergencies, legally required timely notifications and technology use may be sent by computer services via email to Vice Presidents, or the Director of Environmental Health and Safety and Security.

## **Photography and Recordings**

The communications department is responsible for maintaining an archive of college photos for use in publications and on websites. In accordance with GBC policy, faculty and staff who wish to contribute to the marketing and promotion of Great Basin College and take photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, or any other electronic or digital method of recording, must ask their subjects to sign the college release agreement: ([Hyperlink to form](#)).

If it is logistically impossible for all subjects to sign the above form (for example at a campus- wide event), they must be notified that their likeness will be captured. Below are some examples of how to remedy this.

### **Notification Language at Entry to Event**

Attendance at this event constitutes an agreement to Great Basin College's use and distribution, now and in the future, of the attendees' image or voice in photographs, videotapes, electronic reproductions, or audiotapes of the event. If you have questions or concerns, contact the communications department at 775.327.2149. (If you use this method, you must photograph the notice as it is posted on the day of the event. Please keep this photo on file with the event's photos.)

### **Invitation Language**

A photographer will be taking photographs at [College Event]. Your attendance at the event constitutes agreement to the college's use and distribution (now and in the future) of your image or voice in photographs, videotapes, electronic reproductions, or audiotapes. If you have questions, contact communications department at 775.327.2149.

Do not assume that any photo that appears on the web is free to use. Please consult with the communications department before using a photo for use on the college site or in official publications.

## **Printing**

Please remember the following before submitting your work for printing: all publications, brochures, etc. that will be distributed off campus and/or use the college logo must be reviewed by communications department prior to submitting for printing to ensure consistency of messaging and adherence to college graphic and visual identity standards 5 business days prior to distribution. Authorization can be obtained by contacting the communications department at 775.327.2149 or emailing it to [communications@gbcnv.edu](mailto:communications@gbcnv.edu).

## **Business Cards**

Business cards serve to introduce both the individual and the college, and GBC's cards have been designed with that in mind. They have a distinctive look that is consistent with the college's overall visual identity program. They also follow a standardized format.

To request business cards, please fill out a [business card request form](#).

## **Electronic Letterhead**

A GBC letterhead template is available for authorized faculty and staff use. Please contact Tasha Storla at [tasha.storla@gbcnv.edu](mailto:tasha.storla@gbcnv.edu) or 775.327.2149 to make a request.

## Social Media

Great Basin College encourages appropriate use of social media as a method for communicating ideas and information and as part of its educational mission. The college's policy on social media is as follows:

GBC provides access to the internet for all employees as both an essential service and a privilege. This includes the use of social networking sites and access to an array of posts and blogs—including permission to write a blog of one's own—as part of one's professional activities. The college defines professional activities as those that advance the college's mission of education, research, and public service.

In light of this definition, each employee is reminded that when they blog, contribute to a wiki, or accesses a social networking site with a GBC email address, the employee is a representative of the college and must act accordingly. This means an employee can use platforms such as Facebook or Twitter to communicate with students, faculty, staff, or other professional colleagues in matters related to their teaching and/or professional responsibilities at Great Basin College.

Employees who use a GBC email account for social network activity must consult their supervisor and/or dean in advance of their intention to use such platforms. In addition, staff or faculty using a GBC address to create or post comments to blogs or posts, or who reference their professional affiliation to GBC, should include this disclaimer:

*These comments and/or posts are my own and do not necessarily reflect GBC's opinion, strategies, or policies.*

Some activities that would NOT be considered acceptable uses of the internet from a GBC account include, but are not limited to:

- Posting items anonymously or under a pseudonym
- Conducting personal social relationships unrelated to college activities
- Using and creating an account with dating and/or matchmaking sites
- Engaging in partisan political fundraising activity
- Engaging in online gambling
- Posting comments or writing blogs that are obscene or untrue
- Using social networking sites or blog postings to harass others
- Selling goods or services for personal financial profit

If college employees wish to use personal email accounts on social networking platforms, posts, or blogs, the college encourages its employees to keep the following in mind:

**Blog at your own risk:** When you air your personal opinions via a blog or a social networking platform, you are legally responsible for your commentary. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you for your posts. Please note that GBC will not indemnify an employee for anything they write on a post or blog, either under the GBC email account or a private one. Furthermore, GBC reserves the right to take action against any employee who uses the internet with campus equipment or email addresses for illegal or inappropriate activities.

Social network and blog posts can generate media coverage—be prepared to attract media interest and observe the Great Basin College policy, summarized below, for fielding queries from reporters.

Be thoughtful and accurate in your posts regarding the college and colleagues. All college employees can be viewed as representatives of GBC—even if they use non-campus addresses—and that can add significance to your postings/comments. Be discreet, respectful, gracious, and as accurate/factual as you can be in any comments or content you post online. Take particular care of spelling, punctuation, and grammar— it DOES reflect on you professionally as well as on the college.

Blogs and posts often attract the attention of reporters, and you may find a member of a media outlet, whether print, broadcast, or digital, contacting you for additional comment. The communications department strongly urges faculty and staff to refer all such media queries directly to the communications department prior to responding to such queries. Queries directed to GBC employees must be handled in collaboration and consultation with the communications department even when private accounts are used.

## **College Name**

Great Basin College or GBC are the official names for the college as recommended by faculty and staff. These are the only two names that should be used when communicating with prospective students, current students and their families, alumni, the community, and public officials.

## **College Logo**

The Great Basin College logos and form templates are available for download at [\(hyperlink\)](#).

Printing of the logo in alternate colors, shapes, sizes, or fonts requires prior approval by the communications department.

The logo should never be used to imply endorsement of a product or service not provided by GBC nor incorporated into another logo without prior approval by the communications department.

Use of the logo by other than authorized college employees is prohibited unless approved in writing by the Director of Communications. Likewise, the development of additional logos for departments, functions of the college, etc. must be approved in advance by the Director of Communications.

Authorization and additional information is available by calling the communications department at 775.327.2149.

## **Athletic Logo**

The athletic logo, the bighorn, may be used only by the athletic department, campus store or by special permission from the communications department. It should not be used in place of, or alongside of, the GBC logo. The bighorn is a unique symbol for the college's athletic teams, and, as such, should not be used to represent academic or administrative units of the college nor by individuals employed by the college. Exceptions for athletic-related events must be approved by the communications department.

## **Advertising**

All advertisements for Great Basin College, its programs, and events, must be approved in advance by the communications department. Final submission of the advertisement will be done by the Director of Communications in conjunction with the requesting department or individual. The department or individual placing the advertisement, in combination with the Director of

Communications, is responsible for proofreading and fact-checking the content prior to submission. The communications department will assist in advertisement layout and design.

## **Government Relations**

Any correspondence by college employees with public officials needs to be reported to Vice President for Business Affairs Sonja Sibert by the 23rd of the month for contact in the prior month. Please email her the following information:

Contact name and title  
Date contact occurred  
Overall outline of communication

Inquiries from government officials and their representatives to visit GBC or use campus facilities should be referred directly to Sonja Sibert, Vice President for Business Affairs, at 775.327.2106 or [sonja.sibert@gbcnv.edu](mailto:sonja.sibert@gbcnv.edu).

## **College Website**

In an effort to keep the GBC website up to date, relevant, and informative as possible, each department is responsible for their webpage content. Content owners are encouraged to routinely review their pages and make update requests to the webmaster in a timely manner for needed edits. If there is an ADA issue, grammar error or other mistake you will be contacted as soon as possible.

