

UBC FACULTY OF MEDICINE MEDIA SPOKESPERSON POLICY

The UBC Faculty of Medicine encourages and supports faculty members who work with the media.

The UBC Faculty of Medicine spokesperson policy provides guidelines for faculty members who work with the media to provide commentary in their **academic area of expertise** and outlines the Faculty's policy for media requests regarding **issues which have the potential to affect its reputation**.

In support of the University's commitment to accountability, faculty members are encouraged to provide reliable and responsible expertise to the media.

PART I: EXPERT COMMENTARY

Routine inquiries during regular business operations about health and life sciences media stories will be referred to a "resident expert" by the UBC Public Affairs Office or the Faculty of Medicine Communications Director or Manager.

Media also have the opportunity to contact faculty members (or "resident experts") **directly** using the Public Affairs online database. (See: www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca)

It has been noted that about 80 per cent of reporters prefer to cite information from academic experts in their stories. This provides an excellent opportunity for the Faculty to promote its education, research and community service program.

When You are Contacted by the Media:

- The FoM Communications Director or Manager and the UBC Public Affairs Office are both available to coordinate interview requests. (Contact information provided below).
- We ask that all issues with the potential to affect the reputation of the Faculty or the University and/or concerning administration and policies be referred to the FoM Communications Manager before an interview is conducted. While we respect media deadlines, it is also important to advise Public Affairs and the Faculty's Communications Group about your commentary.
- If you do **not** feel comfortable answering the call, need assistance and/or advice, please contact the FoM Communications Director or Manager or the UBC Public Affairs Office.
- If you decide to respond without consultation:
 - Call back promptly if possible, media is 24/7 and deadlines move along quickly.
 - Before commenting:
 - Find out what information the reporter is seeking and what information he/she already has obtained.
 - Determine whether you are the most knowledgeable and responsible (academically and/or clinically) person to deal with the subject.

- Find out how the information will be used -- whether the reporter wants a simple quote for a short news story or extensive background for a feature story.
- If possible determine who else the media is speaking with, sometimes you can assist by providing other names to round out a story.
- Find out what type of deadline the person has to meet and do your best to give him/her as much time as possible before that deadline.

PART II: ISSUES MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

For controversial topics, policies and announcements, there should be only one spokesperson for a key issue. This ensures senior leaders/people from the organization are not in conflict on major issues in the media.

The Director or Manager, Communications, Faculty of Medicine working with the UBC Public Affairs Office will select the spokesperson.

In general, the spokesperson will be the same person who speaks on the issue in other settings such as student meetings, Faculty Executive, Senate, Board of Governors, etc.

Once the spokesperson is identified, it will be widely communicated who is speaking to the issue. A communications plan with key messages will be developed for all major media issues and shared with key players. For rapidly emerging issues, UBC Public Affairs and the Faculty of Medicine Communications Director or Manager will develop a strategy and key messages to meet media deadlines.

The UBC Faculty of Medicine needs to keep “the door open” in good times and bad. Avoiding comment on sensitive issues does not prevent a story from running and robs the Faculty of an opportunity to present facts and perspective. A prompt response ensures that the Faculty’s strong working relationship with the media is not compromised. Enquiries from all media (local, regional, national and international) can be seen as an opportunity to reinforce our key messages to various audiences and deserve attention.

Hot Topic Issues:

In preparation, general key message statements will be available for the following:

- Use of cadavers in teaching
- Teaching abortion procedures
- Medical student debt
- Doctor shortage (in particular family doctor shortages)
- Sleep deprived residents
- International Medical Graduates
- Use of animals in teaching/research
- Animal care research
- Clinical faculty teaching/funding
- Research ethics/clinical studies and consent

Suggested Spokespeople By Topic:

Gavin Stuart, Dean and Vice Provost, Health

- Government relations
- Reaction to government announcements (e.g. budgets)
- Senior operational issues
- Funding issues/inquiries
- Major gifts
- Tuition
- Faculty retention and recruitment
- Clinical faculty issues
- Hospital/clinical partners
- Medical school expansion (e.g. new sites, government announcements, media releases)
- Doctor shortage
- Health care reform
- Building construction and renewal

TBD (depending on specific topic), Education

- Possible spokesperson when the Dean is unavailable or away
- Student issues (e.g. misconduct)
- Academic issues
- Undergraduate curriculum (e.g. use of cadavers; use of animals in teaching; abortion procedures)
- Residency/Postgraduate programs (e.g. sleep deprived residents)
- International Medical Graduate Program
- Medical school expansion- distributed program
- Enrolment numbers
- Admissions
- Financial aid

Alison Buchan, Senior Associate Dean, Research

- Possible spokesperson when the Dean is unavailable or away
- Research grants
- Research funding
- Research Chairs
- Postgraduate research programs
- Animal care research and issues
- Research facilities, including animal care facilities
- Ethics in research
- Research affiliates (e.g. Centres and Institutes)

Ross MacGillivray, Vice – Dean, Academic Affairs

- Possible spokesperson when the Dean is unavailable or away
- Faculty appointments
- Faculty human resource issues
- Faculty awards

- Equity/Diversity issues or inquiries
- Conflict-of-interest issues

Other senior team members may also speak to media from time to time on specific issues based on requests from the Communications Manager.

When You are Contacted by the Media:

- We ask that all issues with the potential to affect the reputation of the Faculty or the University and all requests for comment concerning University/Faculty administration and policies be referred to the FoM Communications Manager before an interview is conducted. The FoM Communications Manager will work with the UBC Office of Public Affairs to determine the Faculty's response.
- If you are not a designated spokesperson, please refer the call to the FoM Communications Manager or the most appropriate spokesperson listed above.
- If you are a designated spokesperson and feel comfortable answering the reporter's questions or doing the interview, please feel free to do so. Please let the FoM Communications Manager know by email or phone that the interview has occurred.
- If you do **not** feel comfortable answering the call, or need assistance and advice, please contact the FoM Communications Director or Manager. If a reply is needed urgently and you cannot reach the FoM Communications Manager, please contact one of the alternative people listed below.

PART III: CONTACTS:

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