Media and Public Commentary Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University encourages a constructive and professional approach to media interactions and public communication or activities to ensure the reputation and image of the University is maintained.

(2) Public comment and opinion can be expressed in many ways, such as but not limited to, public speaking engagements, comments made to the media by press release, telephone interview or briefing, comments or information in any form which may be posted on social media or any views expressed in letters to the press including electronic communications, on talkback radio, in books, journals or notices that might reach the community at large or a relevant portion of it.

(3) While the University considers it important for staff members to participate in the exchange of information, opinion and ideas, staff members are expected to adhere at all times to the Code of Conduct and all other applicable University governing documents.

(4) For further information about this document or media and public commentary in general, contact the Director Media and Communications.

Section 2 - Statement of Authority

(5) The authority behind this policy is the Charles Darwin University Act 2003 part 3, section 15.

Section 3 - Compliance

(6) This is a compliance requirement under the University's Code of Conduct.

Section 4 - Intent

(7) This policy outlines the University's expectations and guidelines with respect to media and public comment and applies to all University staff members whenever they are in communication with the media. The Media and Public Commentary Policy is intended to stand alongside, but not exclude or replace, the rights and obligations of the staff member under common law and applicable legislation.

Section 5 - Relevant Definitions

(8) In the context of this document:

a. Area of expertise means the particular acknowledged knowledge base of a member of staff;
b. Expert comment means comment within the staff member's area of expertise, including participation in public debates, written, electronic or verbal opinions in any way concerning issues related to their area of expertise, and initiating or responding to media enquiries or issues that may arise concerning their area of expertise;

c. Expert commentator means a staff member who, as a result of his or her area of expertise, is authorised by the University to speak to the media or make public comments on issues in their field;
d. Governance document means a formally approved document that outlines non-discretionary governing principles and intentions, in order to guide University practice. Governance documents are a formal statement of intent that mandate principles or standards that apply to the University's governance or operations or to the practice and conduct of its staff and students they include the CDU Act, by-laws, policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, codes and the Enterprise Agreement;
e. Individual comment means the right of any staff member to freely express their opinions held in their private capacity as an individual member of society;
f. Media means all print, radio, television, film, electronic and social media;
g. Media statement means a written (for example letters to the editor, opinion pieces) or verbal comment provided to the media by a University spokesperson or expert commentator to the media or where the media is reasonably likely to be or report;
h. Public comment means and includes comments under the name of the University that may reach the community;
i. Senior Executive means a staff member of the University holding the position of Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor or Chief Financial Officer or equivalent;
j. Senior Manager means a staff member of the University holding the position of Director or Head of School or equivalent;
k. Staff member means anyone employed by the University and includes all continuing, fixed-term, casual, adjunct or honorary staff or those holding University offices or who are a member of a University committee;
l. Social media means any facility for online publication and commentary using highly accessible, expandable and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the internet. It is a, interactive tool that facilitates comments and/or conversations that expand the reach of work and enables others to share with friends and networks, and includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, pod casting, forums, video and photo posting, RSS, social bookmarking, tagging, mash ups, virtual worlds and any social networks or networking sites including, but not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+ and Flickr;
m. University media release means a document provided to the media on the University's media release template quoting an authorised University spokesperson or expert commentator and can only be released by the Office of Media and Communications; and
n. University spokesperson means a staff member authorised by the University to speak to the media or make public comments on behalf of the University.

Section 6 - Policy

(9) The University encourages staff members to deal with the media and the public in order to promote the activities of the institution and to inform the public, government, and the private sector about activities that will be of legitimate interest to them.

University Spokesperson

(10) Any media enquiry or request that falls within the authority of a University spokesperson must be directed to the Director Media and Communications who will provide specialist media advice, as required, and/or respond as appropriate to the enquiry or request.

(11) The University's corporate position on matters of interest to the media and/or via public comment can only be represented by an authorised University Spokesperson.

(12) When acting as an official University spokesperson, the expectations are:

a. that the spokesperson has received some form of media training. All authorised University spokespeople must complete the necessary internal training before speaking on behalf of the University;
b. that the spokesperson is prepared and able to provide the time and resources in maintaining a social media presence;
c. that the spokesperson protects the reputation of the University and the professional reputation of its staff members and stakeholders;
d. that all applicable University Governing Documents will be adhered to and the rules and agreements of the social media channel in use will be followed;
e. that the spokesperson's affiliation with the University is disclosed including any limitations to the spokespersons authority to speak on behalf of the University;
f. that the spokesperson will respect the University's copyright and intellectual property rights, trademarks, rights of publicity and other third-party rights. Appropriate credit must be given and permission sought to duplicate shared content;
g. that all comments are accurate, transparent and any personal views are kept separate; and
h. that the spokesperson behaves ethically at all times.

Expert Comment

(13) The University recognises and protects the concept and practice of freedom of opinion and expression as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and the pursuit of scholarship.

(14) However, this right carries with it the duty of staff members to use this freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for knowledge and truth, grounded in scholarly evidence. Within the ambit of freedom of opinion and expression lies the traditional role of the University in providing informed comment on societal mores and practice, and in challenging held beliefs, policies and structures.

(15) Staff members must at all times observe and conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct, which is based on the ethical principles of fairness, respect, integrity and professionalism, accountability, equality of opportunity and values based leadership.

(16) Every staff member is accountable for their publically made comments and must ensure they accord with the Code of Conduct, including that they are honest, non-discriminatory and independent.

(17) In engaging with the media, expert commentators can expect the support of the University. This does not imply endorsement of a particular view put forward, but means that the right to speak as a University staff member in his or her area/s of expertise will be upheld. The University expects that no comment, statement or disclosure of any confidential information will be made.

(18) Where an expert commentator is requested to provide media comment directly, he or she is free to respond to requests within his or her area of expertise in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

(19) Any expert commentator who is requested to provide media comment should liaise with the Director Media and Communications to ensure that, if there are follow up enquiries, the University response is coordinated and consistent.

(20) Staff members are free to initiate or respond to any media matter within their area of expertise, however, the Director Media and Communications or Senior Media Officer should be informed to maximise any publicity opportunities. The Office of Media and Communications should be made aware of all communications with the media.

(21) Where a media statement has the potential to cause offence, the staff member should consult his or her Senior Manager and the Director Media and Communications, who will consult with the relevant Senior Executive (as necessary) before communicating with the media or the public. This will allow the University to exercise its duty of

care to staff members who might otherwise be the subject of a public controversy, as well as effectively manage the University's stakeholder relations. It is not acceptable for staff members to engage with the media or public in any activity or comment that is designed to bring the University into disrepute.

(22) Where public comments are offered by staff as members of the University, it is expected that the comments will relate directly to their individual area/s of expertise of their appointment. In that case, staff members may use the University's name and give the title of their University appointment in order to establish their credentials.

Individual Comment

(23) This Policy does not restrict the right of any staff member to freely express opinions in his or her private capacity as an individual member of society. However, individuals who wish to make public comment in this capacity must not in any way indicate that he or she is speaking for or on behalf of the University in accordance with his or her obligations under the Code of Conduct and any other University governing documents.

(24) This means that private statements made must not include the University's name or the title of the staff member's University appointment or identify the staff member's University appointment or identify the staff member in any way as a staff member of the University.

Media Training

(25) Staff members who may become expert commentators should have media training and seek assistance from the Office of Media and Communications.

Social Media

(26) Social media is defined above under the heading Relevant Definitions. As this is a quickly evolving space, staff members are encouraged to return to this policy regularly as it may change as social media continues to change.

(27) The University expects that while engaging in social media all staff observe and conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other University governing documents, which enshrine the values of accountability, integrity, respect and service.

(28) Staff members are reminded that the use of private computers or phones in their private time to produce material such as comments, videos, images and recordings to social media sites, which may harm the University's reputation and may lead to disciplinary action (including termination of employment). Every staff member is therefore reminded that he or she is accountable for the material he or she posts on-line, and his or her on-line activity must accord with the guidelines outlined above in this Policy

(29) Staff members should use their real name and always be honest and transparent when communicating. Staff members are welcome to express an opposing viewpoint if it is done so in a respectful way. If staff members are concerned about an issue related to the University, he or she should speak with the Director Media and Communications before sharing their concerns via social media. Avoid commenting on unfamiliar topics and ensure personal opinions are distinguished from professional discourse. For example, when commenting on a topic outside a staff member's area of expertise, include a disclaimer: the postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the positions, strategies or opinions of Charles Darwin University.

(30) Staff members must not disclose sensitive, confidential or proprietary information. Be careful not to defame, harm, bully, vilify or discriminate in any way against any other person in what is posted. Breach of copyright laws is unlawful. Staff members must ensure he or she adheres to copyright laws and link to sources whenever possible.

(31) Academic staff members are not permitted to post copyrighted teaching materials and resources on social media sites without prior written permission from the owner (this includes part of or whole teaching packages as developed,

owned or utilised by the University). Academic staff members must also be aware that not all students, colleagues and peers are able, or want to, access social media as a learning and/or communication tool. Wherever possible, academic staff members should utilise the internal University owned and supported forms of social media, which are part of Learnline.

(32) The University expects a staff member's personal on-line activities at work will not interfere with his or her job performance or productivity.

Non-Compliance

(33) Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2018 or the Charles Darwin University (Student Conduct) By-Laws.

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Responsible Executive	Shannon Holborn Vice-President Global and External Relations
Implementation Officer	Kimberley Pickens Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
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