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1.0 Definition of Terms

Banner: a long strip of material containing or bearing content or information hung or hoisted within the University community for advertising purposes.

Brochure: a booklet containing pictures and information about a product, service or an event of the University.

Confidential information: information intended to be kept secret.

Downward communication: communication from top Management or key staff of the University to staff, students and persons working with the University.

External communication: communication with the media, regulatory bodies, other tertiary institutions, the alumni and the general public.

Internal communication: official information shared between/among departments, committees, staff and students.

Lateral communication: internal communication among or between departments or authority of equal powers or status of the University.

Upward communication: communication from staff, students and persons working with the University to top Management or key staff of the University.

Flyer: A small printed notice or leaflet which is used for advertising programmes, events and services of the University.

Media: the main means of mass communication, including broadcasting (TV & radio), publishing (newspapers, newsletters, magazines or books) and the Internet (podcasts, blogs or videos).

Poster: A notice or picture that is stuck on a wall or board to advertise programmes, events, services or to inform the public about programmes, events or services of the University.

2.0 Introduction

Communication is fundamentally an inherent behaviour for actualizing the goals and aspirations of every organisation. It is, therefore, impossible not to communicate in any human organization.

Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU) has had different forms of communication with its stakeholders since its establishment in 1999. Such forms of communication and relations had gone on without a well formulated Communication and Relations Policy.

However, following the conversion of the Institution in April, 2020 to a Technical University, there has been an overgrowing need to regulate the internal and external communication and relations of the University.

Therefore, this Policy formulates guidelines to regulate communication and relations between the University and its stakeholders in order to preserve the integrity and image of the University and to ensure consistency and effective communication and relations. It shall also provide guidelines to coordinate, manage and respond to the diverse needs of the University community and its stakeholders. This Policy provides guidelines on how, when, where, and what to communicate and relate with the University's publics.

3.0 Purpose of the Policy

In line with the letter and spirit of the vision and mission of the University, as driven by its Strategic Plan, the purpose of this policy is to:

- i. ensure a continuous positive image and awareness of the University, including its programmes and services;
- ii. regulate and standardize communication and relations of the University to ensure the effectiveness of its programmes and services and enhance the dissemination of information to the general public;
- iii. be as honest and accurate as possible in communicating and relating with stakeholders;
- iv. foster good relationships with all its stakeholders;
- v. proactively disseminate information that promotes the University's visibility.

These among others shall define communication and relations efforts of the University without compromising its standards and core values.

4.0 Scope of the Policy

This Communication and Relations Policy focuses on both internal and external communication and relations of the University. Internal communication and relations such as inter and intra faculties/schools, directorates, departments, centres, committees, staff and students; and external communication and relations with the media, regulatory bodies, other tertiary institutions, the alumni and the general public including their strategies such as promotional flyers, publications, bulletins, brochures, documentation and reports, press releases, website updates, social media and media discussions are the thrust areas of this Policy.

5.0 General Guidelines on Internal Communication and Relations

The University's internal communication and relations refer to upward, downward and lateral communication and relations of staff, students and persons working with the University. It also includes internal promotional flyers, publications, bulletins, brochures, documentation and reports, press releases, website updates, social and traditional media engagement for the internal transmission of information and content meant to keep the University workers and students abreast of progress and developments in the University. Therefore:

- i. all persons working with the University are responsible for ensuring effective continuous and interactive internal communication and relations as part of the University's routine operations.
- ii. all persons working with the University shall make every reasonable effort to transmit and disseminate accurate information and content within and outside the University's community.
- iii. communication, content and relations of the University that are classified, confidential or reserved shall only be disclosed if required by law and by appropriate authority in accordance with the University Statutes.
- iv. any member of the public taking photographs or videos for filming purposes must seek prior approval or consent from the Directorate of Public Affairs.
- v. photographers who turn up at events of the University must be cleared to film or take photographs.

5.1 Guidelines on Internal Posters and Banners

All members of the University shall post or hoist information or content as follows:

- i. any communication or information for posting or hoisting within the University campuses and installations including the University's Notice Boards, the Senior Common Room and the Junior Common Rooms shall require approval for posting and/or hoisting from the Directorate of Public Affairs (DPA);
- ii. communication or information for posting or hoisting on Departmental Notice Boards shall be approved by the Heads of Department;
- iii. all postings within the Library must be in accordance with Library rules and regulations;
- iv. the DPA shall stamp the posters or banners before same are posted or hoisted on the University's Notice Boards and installations;
- v. Departmental Notice Boards and Departmental Structures shall only display posters or banners relating to the subject content and events of interest to the specific department;
- vi. the approval process for posting or hoisting information or content shall require a minimum of two (2) days. However, in emergencies, the approving Office may consider a lesser time;
- vii. event posters and banners shall be removed two (2) days after the event;
- viii. only recognized student organizations, academic units, faculties, staff and students shall post and/or hoist information or content on notice boards;
- ix. advertisements or commercial posting or hoisting of University's events have priority and may not require prior approval from the DPA;
- x. advertisements or commercial postings or hoisting not connected with the University may be posted or hoisted based on the availability of space including other regulations as may be determined by the University;
- xi. no poster or banner shall cover or block another active poster or banner.

- xii. all posters and/or banners seeking approval must be accompanied with a letter requesting approval indicating the organization or individual and contact information for the event;
- xiii. no poster or banner shall be posted or hoisted on vehicles, trash cans, support columns, buildings, furniture, poles, windows or doors, including all other unapproved places;
- xiv. no permanent adhesives shall be used to post or hoist posters or banners to posting or hoisting surfaces;
- xv. writing on the floor or chalking shall only be done by recognized bodies and only on concrete or asphalt. It shall not be done under covered areas.
- xvi. No permanent writings shall be allowed.
- xvii. The DPA reserves the right to reject publicity materials if they are deemed inappropriate or fail to comply with University regulations.

5.2 Speaking at Events and Resources for Events

- i. The DPA is responsible for overseeing functions and events, including matriculations, congregations, alumni programmes, inaugural, inter-faculty and valedictory lectures.
- ii. All persons working with the University shall liaise with and inform the DPA on their events, content/message and materials to be presented to enable the Directorate to provide support and relevant resources for successful events.

6.0 Guidelines on External Communication and Relations

6.1 Media and Public Relations

The University must communicate consistently and report accurately in the media and to the public in general. This is to present a favourable public image of the University, its programmes and services. External communication and relations shall be guided by the following:

- i. the Head of the DPA in consultation with the Registrar shall speak to the media on behalf of the University;
- ii. the Council Chairman or Vice Chancellor may, however, appoint a spokesperson on specific matters of the University.
- iii. staff, students and persons working with the University shall not speak to the media on behalf of the University without prior authorization from the Registrar;
- iv. no official information or details shall be communicated to the general public without prior approval from or consultation with the DPA;
- v. all media inquiries shall be directed or re-directed to the DPA;
- vi. The DPA shall deal with media enquiries by liaising with relevant authorities and departments in preparing responses;
- vii. staff, students and persons working with the University are to ensure that they do not post social media content that may bring the image of the University into disrepute or adversely affect their own professionalism;
- viii. all official media interviews shall be done with support from the DPA in order to ensure that sensitive or confidential matters are treated as such;
- ix. press releases or statements shall always be prepared with and issued through the DPA;
- x. staff, students and persons working with the University have the responsibility to alert the DPA on possible negative publicity, sensitive or controversial issues/matters;
- xi. the head of DPA shall inform the Registrar of any contentious, sensitive or initiative which is likely to attract positive or negative media for the University;
- xii. the DPA shall advise how best to attract positive media coverage for good news, events and projects.

6.2 Protocol

- i. The DPA shall manage all protocols, including VIP/celebrity visits and donations to the University (e.g. Royal visits, visits by MPs, visits by celebrities, etc.).
- ii. Staff connected or involved in such visits shall contact the DPA to extend the necessary courtesies.
- iii. No official donation or official visit shall take place without the involvement of the DPA.

6.3 Communication and Relations with Government

Communicating and relating with government bodies, agencies and non-governmental organizations should be done accurately and timely to maintain good relationship, trust and respect. Therefore:

- i. staff, students and persons working with the University may consult or contact the DPA for advice and/or review of any communication to government or non-governmental organizations.
- ii. the Council Chairman or the Vice Chancellor shall be consulted for direction on any matter or question that may arise in communicating or relating with government and non-governmental organizations.

6.4 Advertising/Publicity

- i. The DPA shall evaluate events and opportunities that advertise and publicise the University, its programmes and services to ensure that goals, standards and values align with the University's vision and mission.

- ii. Staff, students and persons working with the University shall consult the DPA in the use of communication technologies (such as e-mail, the Internet, the website and social media) and content for branding and promoting the University, its programmes and services.

6.5 Logo and Seal

The logo is the visual identity of the University and communicates its values, strengths and objectives. Therefore:

- i. the logo must be accurately incorporated into all documents and logistics of the University to distinguish it from other institutions;
- ii. staff, students and persons working with the University who intend to use the logo of the University shall do so prior to seeking approval from the Registrar;
- iii. staff, students and persons working with the University shall ensure the logo of the University is not misused;
- iv. the seal of the University shall remain confidential and be used by only the Registrar where appropriate and as directed by the regulations of the University.

7.0 Violations and Sanctions

All University communication and relations shall comply with this policy as outlined and in accordance with the Statutes of the University.

Sanctions for violating this policy by faculties, departments, units, staff, students, associations and unions shall include, but not limited to:

- (i) dismissal;
- (ii) termination of appointment;
- (iii) suspension for a stated period without pay;
- (iv) reduction in rank or grade;
- (v) interdiction;
- (vi) denial or deferment of promotion;
- (vii) recovery of money or property which is the subject of misconduct;
- (viii) stoppage of increment;
- (ix) forfeiture of pay for a stated period;
- (x) withholding an increment;
- (xi) reprimand;
- (xii) warning;
- (xiii) loss of future posting and/or hoisting opportunity, and
- (xiv) for registered organizations, associations or societies, disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the circumstance as prescribed by the University's relevant policies shall apply.

These sanctions shall apply in accordance with laid down procedures of the Statutes of the University.

8.0 Administration and Monitoring

The DPA is responsible for administering and overseeing compliance regarding this policy by all staff, students and persons working with the University. The DPA shall note and compile recommendations for review of this policy for the consideration of the Academic Board.

9.0 References

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