

**Feuchtenberger, Karen**

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**From:** Ammerman, Paula <PRA4@psu.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 20, 2011 6:59 PM  
**Subject:** Media Inquiries  
**Attachments:** Media Primer for Non Spokesperson Trustees, 11 20 11.docx; Board Communication memo\_11-19-11.docx

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

Attached to this message are the recommendations from Ketchum regarding Trustee communications.

Thank you.

Paula R. Ammerman  
Director, Board of Trustees Office  
The Pennsylvania State University  
205 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814) 865-2521; (814) 863-4631 (FAX)  
[pra4@psu.edu](mailto:pra4@psu.edu)

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**PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL****Media Primer for Non-Spokesperson Trustees**

*Summary of actions from "Trustee communication" memo:*

**Goal:** Speak with one voice to reinforce unity of the Board

**Action plan:**

- Limit comments to written communications (press releases, media statements) from the entire Board of Trustees, no single individual
- Designate limited number of spokespeople for official statements when interviews are necessary or unavoidable
  - Board Chair and Vice Chair, as availability allows
- Non-spokesperson Trustees refrain from offering opinions about events at Penn State
  - Trustees can seek counsel from Chair, Vice Chair, Legal, University Relations or Ketchum if questions arise
- Alert University Relations when an inquiry is received
  - Contact: Bill Mahon, Vice President University Relations
    - 814-777-4399; [np3@psu.edu](mailto:np3@psu.edu)

**Guidance to handle media or public inquiries on Board of Trustees matters:**

- Keep the following in mind if approached by the media:
  - You are ALWAYS on the record
  - Don't guess. Saying "I don't know" is OK
  - Don't repeat the reporter's language, particularly negative words, e.g., "blame"
  - Don't say "no comment." Instead, use the statements below to redirect the inquiry appropriately
- In keeping with the current policy, use the following statements to deflect and redirect all inquiries to previously designated spokespeople:
  - "My opinions are shared with the Board of Trustees. Together, we make decisions and take actions."
  - "It's best to ask our Chair or Vice Chair that question, since they are in the best position to reflect the collective opinions and actions of the Board."

**PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL**

**To:** Board of Trustees  
The Pennsylvania State University

**From:** Ketchum

**Date:** November 19, 2011

**Re:** Trustee communication

This memo outlines our recommendations concerning Trustee communications outside of Board meetings, calls and executive sessions.

With national media parsing every comment from a Trustee, we believe it is paramount that the Board speaks with one voice as much as possible. The most effective way to accomplish this goal is for the Board to limit comments to written communications (e.g., press releases, media statements). When direct interviews are necessary or unavoidable, we recommend that the Board designate a limited number of spokespeople to conduct such interviews. At this time, Ketchum's recommendation is for all media interaction to be limited to Board Chair Steve Garban and Vice Chair John Surma, as much as their availability allows.

The Special Committee may choose to mirror this approach, with Ken Frazier and Ron Tomalis serving as primary spokespeople. However, to ensure strict independence and avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, the Special Committee is hiring separate communications counsel (along with separate legal counsel). That communications firm will advise the Special Committee on all media relations and other communications activities surrounding the investigation, beginning with Monday's announcement.

Aside from announcing the results of the Special Committee's investigation, there are likely upcoming opportunities for the Board to proactively speak. Some of these near-term opportunities may include:

- Statement of the Board's support of the Special Committee (Monday)
- Decisions about use of funds from a Bowl game (2-3 weeks)
- Any subsequent Board actions based on findings of the investigation – during the investigation or after the final report is presented (as needed)
- Announcement of high-level personnel changes (as needed)
- Responses to litigation directed at the Board or University (as needed)

Additionally, we believe there will be numerous opportunities for individual Trustees to speak to non-media audiences at Penn State such as students, athletes, faculty and alumni. Such opportunities should be vetted by President Erickson or the Board to ensure it is appropriate for a Trustee to speak, and to allow Ketchum and/or University Relations to ensure the Trustee's remarks reflect the messaging used by the Board and President Erickson.

Ideally, these opportunities would allow Trustees to speak, but not expose them to questioning by the media. Examples may include:

- Future meetings of the Faculty Senate (December 6, January 24)
- Fall commencement (December 17)
- One-on-one discussions with key personnel to emphasize their value to the University (as needed)
- Interactions with leadership candidates (e.g., CFO)
- Other high-profile events around Penn State campuses (ongoing)

Finally, we understand the significant visibility that Penn State Trustees have across the University community and in many other walks of life. Trustees may be approached by the media or asked to speak at professional gatherings or other events having nothing to do with Penn State. In such instances, we strongly recommend that Trustees refrain from giving their personal opinions about events at Penn State – particularly the Board's deliberations and decisions. If it would be helpful, Ketchum and University Relations can prepare and distribute to the Board some sample responses to the most frequent questions.

Adhering to these recommendations will require discipline among Trustees, but ultimately has the greatest chances of success in unifying the Board's message. A united Board carries greater weight, which can more effectively aid our collective efforts to change the narrative surrounding Penn State. A good rule of thumb is that Trustee who finds him- or herself unsure of a particular action to seek counsel from Chair Garban, Vice Chair Surma, Legal, University Relations, or Ketchum.