Chuka University

CHUKA UNIVERSITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

June, 2017

FOREWORD

Communication is the fine thread that connects all activities and functions both internally and externally in an institution. The overarching objective of this policy document is to create, strengthen and preserve support of Chuka University among key University publics. The policy is instituted based on our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 which lays great prominence on two-way communication systems which engenders feedback between the University and its key stakeholders.

This policy sets out how Chuka University will reflect her vision through a range of communication methods aimed at a number of key audiences. Effective communication will provide all stakeholders with a clear understanding of their responsibilities and obligations. Consequently, the policy establishes principles, rules and procedure applying to communication among the University fraternity, community and with all stakeholders. Chuka University makes a commitment to provide stakeholders with timely, accurate, clear, objective and comprehensive information about information flow, communication channels, feedback mechanisms and crisis communication Management.

As we adopt this policy document, it is my sincere hope that minimum communication standards and guidelines would be met for the entirety of the University in our collective effort to truly transform Chuka University into a premier University as espoused in our Strategic Plan blueprint. The University Management will commit itself to the implementation of this policy for its optimum contribution towards the achievement of our Vision and Mission and needs of all our stakeholders.

Prof. Erastus N. Njoka, Ph.D.
Vice-Chancellor/CEO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The preparation of the Corporate Communication and Public Relations Policy would not have been possible without the contribution of a number of persons and institutions. We are particularly indebted to the taskforce for providing the necessary technical guidance and for ably ensuring the successful preparation of this policy document.

The committee that developed this policy sought to address the internal and external communication function of the University. In regard to internal communication, the committee focused on communication as it happens within the administrative structure of the University as well as the dissemination of knowledge which is the core function of our institution.

In regard to external communication, the committee looked critically at the Public Relations Office of the University and recommended the strengthening of the office with the possibility of a decentralized structure that extends to the entire University.

I therefore sincerely thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Erastus Njoka for his guidance and contribution during the preparation of this policy. I appreciate and applaud the commitment and efforts made by the Corporate Communication and Public Relations Policy Establishment Committee which included Ms. Immaculate Namulia (Secretary), Mr. Henry Nabea, Ms. Judy Wamuya and Mr. Charles Kinyua.

Finally, we hope the implementation of the guidelines provided herein will be useful in steering Chuka University for best communication practices which should be adhered to at all levels of University operations.

John K. Nkanatha
Chairman, Corporate Communication and Public Relations Policy Committee

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OVERVIEW OF CHUKA UNIVERSITY

In 1956, the Chuka community built a Craft Centre to train school leavers to acquire skills that could be useful in nation building. The Centre was upgraded to a Youth Polytechnic in 1969. In 2003, the community felt that they needed an institution that could provide access to higher education and training to the people of Eastern Kenya and Kenya at large. At that time no institution in the Eastern part of Kenya had the capability of educating and training students at diploma and degree levels and as a result education and training opportunities were limited. During the same time, Egerton University was planning to open a Campus in Eastern Kenya. The community then approached Egerton University who found Chuka to be centrally placed and, therefore, suitable for the establishment of a University Campus.

In an effort to get land for the Campus, the Chuka community donated the Ndagani Youth Polytechnic and Sports Stadium. In addition, the Presbyterian Church donated more land on institutions forming the Ndagani Education Complex, which included the Secondary and Primary Schools. The Chuka community also added a further 500 acres at Kairini in Meru South Sub-county to make the total land area 550 acres.

On 21st August, 2004, when H. E. President Mwai Kibaki visited Chuka and held a meeting at Ndagani (the present location of Chuka University), the community through their leaders informed him of their desire to establish a University in the area. Among the dignitaries who attended the meeting were members of parliament from the Greater Meru and senior Government officials. The President supported the aspirations of the people of Meru and pledged Government's support to establish a University at the site. Due to the goodwill of the Government, Egerton University Council approved the establishment of a Campus, named Egerton University Eastern Campus. The Campus was then launched on 27th September, 2004. The Youth Polytechnic was then relocated to another site.

On 23rd August, 2007, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki elevated the Egerton University Eastern Campus to Chuka University College through Legal Notice Number 161 of 2007. On 10th October, 2007, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki visited and inaugurated Chuka University College. After about five years, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki visited again and inaugurated Chuka University on 8th January, 2013, making it the 2nd public University to be chartered and the 9th full-fledged public University in Kenya.

The University is located within the Chuka Municipality in Meru South Sub-County, Tharaka-Nithi County. It is situated approximately 186 km from Nairobi along the Nairobi-Meru Highway on the slopes of the snow-capped Mt. Kenya at an altitude of approximately 2,000 m above sea level. The area provides a cool climatic environment, with 16°C to 24°C temperatures and an annual average rainfall of about 1,000 mm, excellent for learning and working.

The University is designated as a centre of excellence in Environmental and Renewable Energy Studies. It offers University education, training and research at certificate, diploma, bachelors, masters and doctorate degree levels in Education and Resources Development, Business Studies, Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Arts and Humanities and Science, Engineering and Technology.

FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS

Motto
Knowledge is Wealth/Akili ni Mali (*Sapientia divitia est*)

Slogan
Inspiring Environmental Sustainability for Better Life

Philosophy Statement
Chuka University believes that sustainable national and global development can be achieved through nurturing an intellectual culture that integrates theory with practice to produce graduates with relevant knowledge, skills and responsible citizenry. The University also believes that quality education, training, research, extension, environmental sustainability and entrepreneurship lead to social cohesion, human integrity, and economic development. These ideals will be realised through passion for excellence, devotion to duty, accountability, prudent utilisation of resources, corporate citizenship, and teamwork. To actualize these beliefs, the University is committed to generation, preservation and sharing of knowledge for effective leadership in education, training, research and extension. The ultimate goal of Chuka University is to be a Premier University for the provision of quality education, training, research and extension in both basic and applied environmental and related studies.

Vision
A Premier University for the provision of quality education, training and research for sustainable national and global development.

Mission
To provide access, generate, preserve and share knowledge for quality, effective and ethical leadership in higher education, training, research and outreach through nurturing an intellectual culture that integrates theory with practice, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Mandate of the University
The mandate of Chuka University is enshrined in her objects and functions as shown below:

Objects of the University
The objects of the University shall be to:
  (1) provide directly, or in collaboration with other institutions of higher learning, facilities for quality University Education, including technological, scientific and professional education, and the integration of teaching, research, outreach and effective application of knowledge and skills to the life, work and welfare of the citizens of Kenya;

  (2) provide and advance University Education and training to appropriately qualified candidates, leading to the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas and certificates and such other qualifications as the Council and the Senate shall from time-to-time determine and in so doing, contribute to realisation of sustainable national economic and social development; and

(3) Provide programmes, products, and services in ways that reflect the principles of equity and social justice.

Functions of Chuka University
The functions of the University shall be to:
(1)   participate in technological innovation as well as in the discovery, transmission, preservation and enhancement of knowledge; and to stimulate the intellectual participation of students in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological development of Kenya;
(2)   inculcate a culture of lifelong learning, responsible citizenry and innovation in technology, engineering and mathematics within the institution and society;
(3)   engage in teaching, training, scholarship, entrepreneurship, research, consultancy, community service, among other educational services, with emphasis on technology and its development, impact and application to society;
(4)   conduct examination for and grant such academic awards as may be provided for in the Statutes and syndicate examinations for award at other institutions as may be approved by the Senate; and
(5)   facilitate the development and provision of appropriate academic programmes and community services.

CORE VALUES

(1)   **Customer Value and Focus:** Enhancing customer satisfaction levels by providing products and services that meet or exceed customer expectations.

(2)   **Diversity and Social Fairness:** Appreciation of varied cultures and commitment to ensure balanced distribution of resources and opportunities while instituting affirmative action to cater for marginalised sections of the society.

(3)   **Environmental Consciousness:** Considering the impact of all activities and programmes to be implemented and taking measures that ensure zero tolerance to environmental damage.

(4)   **Fidelity to the Law:** Dutiful adherence to the Constitution and other legal, statutory and regulatory requirements.

(5)   **Innovation:** Creativity in undertaking programmes and activities earmarked to contribute novel, effective and efficient ways of advancing humanity.

(6)   **Integrity:** Upholding honesty, transparency, accountability and strong moral principles and values in all decisions and actions taken.

(7)   **Passion for Excellence:** Being outstanding in all services, activities and programmes undertaken by the University.

(8)   **Peaceful Co-Existence:** Living harmoniously with neighbours and the environment and promoting the ideals of cohesion, integration and unity.

(9)   **Professionalism and Confidentiality:** Professionalism is the skill, good judgment and polite behaviour exhibited by an expert when discharging responsibilities and delivering services, while confidentiality means commitment to not disclose classified information to unauthorized parties.

(10)   **Prudent Utilisation of Resources:** Utilising resources without wastage and misappropriation by ensuring maximum value and complying with various planned arrangements, internal controls and government regulations.

(11)   **Teamwork:** Adopting a participatory and inclusive approach in undertaking operations and functions of the University.

(12)   **Timeliness and Devotion to Duty:** Timeliness refers to being time-conscious in undertaking activities, assignments and programmes, while devotion to duty is selfless commitment to undertake activities, assignments and programmes for the good and advancement of humanity.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCMT   Crisis Communication Management Team

CCPR   Corporate Communication and Public Relations

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CMP   Crisis Management Plan

COD   Chair of Department

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility

CUE   Commission of University Education

CU   Chuka University

ICT   Information Communication Technology

PR   Public Relations

PRO   Public Relations Officer

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Collaborating Institutions: Organizations which have entered into mutual and formal agreements with Chuka University.

Confidential Material Information: Material information not widely disseminated within or external to the Company which, if disclosed, would be unduly detrimental to the Company's interests.

Crisis Communication: Is an initiative which aims at protecting the reputation of the organization and maintaining its public image.

Crisis Management: Is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders.

Electronic Communications: Any transfers of signals, images, sound, data or intelligence that is created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, distributed, broadcast, stored, held, copied, displayed, read or printed by one or several electronic communications systems.

External Communication: Is the transmission of information between an institution and another person or entity in the company's external environment.

General and Routine Information: Information that would not otherwise be classified as material information, and which is not otherwise required to be kept confidential because of privacy laws.

Internal Communication: Is the transmission of information between organizational members across all levels and organizational units designed to mobilize and empower employees as brand ambassadors.

Media: Means or channel of communication used to reach and influence people at a wider reach.

Public Relations: Is a strategic communication process which is deliberate, planned, sustained and systematic series of communication programmes aimed at creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics through publicity that supports the organization's strategic Management efforts presenting a consistent and coherent corporate image.

Stakeholders/Publics: Is the group of people/audience that influence the business activities of a company or people who have real or potential interest in the company.

Social media: Internet channels that allow stakeholders to create content.

Spokesperson: Someone engaged or elected to speak on behalf of others.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble
There have been changes in the handling of corporate communication all over the world, with an implication that if an organization has to survive and thrive, then it must communicate effectively with all its stakeholders.

Chuka University continues to generate knowledge, and it must ensure that the knowledge is appropriately transmitted to stakeholders. Consequently, the manner in which the University communicates, the content of that communication and the feedback generated are powerful indicators for the University to position itself strategically as it releases its goods, products, and services to the market.

A major challenge facing the University is updating the content of information and presenting it in appropriate forms to its diverse audiences. The range of audiences makes it imperative that the University develops appropriate approaches to sharing information and gauging feedback. This policy was developed against this backdrop as part of the University's commitment to provide stakeholders with timely, accurate, objective and complete information. The policy will enable a smooth flow of information, create feedback mechanisms and manage communication in a structured manner with requisite professionalism.

To this end, as part of the University's commitment to providing stakeholders with timely, accurate, objective and complete information, the policy establishes the principles, rules of engagement and procedures for communication within the University community and with the University's stakeholders.

1.2 Purpose
The goal of this policy is to outline the principles and guidelines, practices and processes that CU will embrace in establishing and sustaining excellent internal and external communication among staff, students and other stakeholders. This will function to maintain a good working environment, peaceful co-existence, promote efficiency and generate better understanding of the University goals and objectives. Through implementation, the policy is tailored to support the achievement of the CU vision and mission.

1.3 Application
The policy applies to the conduct of CU Council members, Management, Senate, Staff, Students, Alumni and other stakeholders. The document equally provides guidelines on stipulated techniques for corporate communication and PR, within the institution including written communication (news releases, advertisements, speeches by senior management, presentations, correspondence) conference and exhibitions, calls, e-mail, social media, blogging and the University website; oral communication such as face-to-face or group meetings, telephone conversations, teleconferences, interviews and press conferences.

1.4 Rationale

Communication competence is set to become a critical success factor for implementing strategic plans successfully in an environment characterized by stiff competition and mounting education needs. PR is a deliberate, planned, sustained and systematic series of communication programmes that support the organization's strategic Management efforts. For CU to full implement its plans and be a thriving and successful institution, it must embrace and practice effective and sustained communication both internally and externally. Students must be provided with information they need to achieve success in their studies. Staff, on the other hand, must have sufficient and correct information so as to be productive in their daily duties.

This policy emphasizes professionalism in communication and serves as a guide to all CU stakeholders with respect to their responsibility in serving the interests of the University. Thus, this policy document is designed to support CU goals and mandates as spelt out in the CU Statutes, other policy documents and guidelines and the strategic plan. CU's vision is to be a premier University for the provision of quality education, training, research and extension in both basic and applied environmental and related studies. These goals are achieved well through the promotion of accountability and good communication practice by all stakeholders of CU.

Strategic communication will be a key means for disseminating CU's values and philosophy to both external and internal publics. Internal communication is particularly vital in strengthening CU's organizational culture and feeling of commitment among staff and students. This policy emphasizes professionalism in communication and serves as a guide to members of the University community with respect to their responsibility in serving the interests of the University. It therefore outlines the planned effort to influence opinion through good character and responsible performance based on mutually satisfactory communication.

Overall, the policy will ensure a sustainable and participative approach to communication by supporting staff roles and initiatives at all levels to achieve CU goals. This is clearly outlined in the Chuka University Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

Strategies	Activity	Baseline	Target	Performance indicator	Time Frame	Budget (Ksh. '000')
SO 24: Development and Projection of a Positive Image of the University						
Institutionalize corporate branding	Adopt corporate University colours	50% adopted	100% colours and their codes adopted	% of colours and their codes in use	2017	None
	Make visible the corporate colours in all University facilities and documents	50% done	100% facilities and documents to be branded	% of branded facilities and documents	2018	None
Develop a marketing strategy	Conduct market research and surveys	1 survey done	1 survey to be done annually	No. of survey reports	2017	1,200
	Establish a Marketing Office in University	Not done	1 Marketing Office	A Marketing Office	2018	1,000
	Develop and implement a marketing plan	Not done	1 marketing plan	Marketing plan	2017-2022	500
Develop and implement publicity programmes	Print and distribute brochures/flyers	15,000 per year	20,000 to be printed per year	No. of flyers printed and distributed	2017-2022	5,000
	Maintain established bill boards	100% are new	100% every 2 years	Number of bill boards repaired	2017-2022	5,000
	Advertise in print and electronic media	3 per year done	6 per year to be done	Number of advertisements	2017-2022	97,800
	Participate in open days and exhibitions	6 per year done	6 per year to be done	No. of open days and exhibitions	2017-2022	25,000
Develop an efficient public relations system	Create Public Relations Office (PRO)	Not done	1 Public Relations Office	PRO in place	2018	21,800
	Hire a PRO	Not done	1 PRO to be hired	PRO in place	2018	HRM
	Develop a Public Relations policy	Not done	1 PR Policy	PR Policy	2018	None
	Develop and implement a Public Relations Charter	Not done	5 programmes in 5 years	No. of PR Programmes	2017-2022	None
Strategies	**Activity**	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Performance indicator**	**Time Frame**	**Budget (Ksh. '000')**

1.5 Overarching Strategies

All communications initiatives will be aligned with key strategies governing CU's efforts to communicate her messages to the various audiences. These strategies are:
  (i) to create new communication opportunities and leverage and amplify existing and emerging opportunities;
  (ii) to integrate emerging technologies into the communications process to effectively reach and influence key audiences;
  (iii) to make the office of University Public Relations/ Corporate Communications central to University-wide communications, in cooperation with campus communicators and University Management;
  (iv) to gain justification of the quality and impact of the University and its leadership.

1.6 Goals and Objectives

The goal of this policy is to support aspirations and mandates of the University as spelt out in the CU Charter, vision and mission as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and other relevant policy documents.

The broad objectives of the CU Corporate Communication and PR Policy are to:
  a) develop a clear and consistent corporate narrative both internally and externally;
  b) provide effective and efficient communication mechanisms among staff, students and other stakeholders;
  c) minimize communication breakdown and delays including overseeing a customer feedback programme;

d) promote the use of appropriate and designated channels of communication;
e) build and maintain the repute and brand of Chuka University;
f) ensure that electronic communications resources are used in compliance with CU charter.

The specific objectives of the policy are to:
1. interpret University information and present in a manner to win support and enhance good relations with all stakeholders;
2. provide advisory and correct communication breaks in the flow of information;
3. establish and maintain good relations with all stakeholders and community through corporate social responsibility and communal outreach programmes;
4. disseminate academic research findings to target publics.

2.0 COMMUNICATION FUNCTION

2.1 Situational Analysis of Chuka University

2.1.1 Information Reach
The assumption is that the usual modes of communication (such as emails, memos, and circulars) send important information to everyone who needs to know and that everyone will receive this information. It is possible however that information does not reach people who do not use some of those methods of communication (such as email).

2.1.2 Uniformity of Information
Different supervisors might sometimes give different, conflicting messages on important issues. These messages cause confusion and distrust among employees.

2.1.3 Flow of Information
Information may not get to employees when and where they need it. Without vital information at the right time and in the right place, the decision-making process is hampered. This delay impacts negatively on project completion and outcomes.

2.1.4 Sharing of Information
In some cases, critical information is not shared by key stakeholders. The top Management often does not engage the employees, who have regular contacts with the customers, on important aspects of the organization. This oversight hampers feedback at all the levels of the institution. Some employees are not freely sharing information with one another. This failure has a bearing on trust, which is an integral element of our institutional core values: a lack of trust has the impact of allowing unhealthy intra-institutional competition, which undermines productivity of teams, departments or units, and the organization.

2.1.5 Clarity of Expectations
The existing structures that are designed to establish effective information sharing and ownership have not yet produced the desired impact with respect to harmonizing expectations. The structures have not been utilized optimally to benefit the wider membership among Management, staff and students.

2.1.6 Communication between Units
The University is a college-based institution, with units located in separate geographical regions. Departments or units in different locations do not communicate with one another as often and as much as those in close proximity do. The distance makes face-to-face meetings difficult to arrange and collaboration takes time. Even in this age of email, cellphones, text messaging, and video conferencing, critical communication among leaders, between the Management and employees, and between departments or units, is still not as effective as it should.

2.1.7 Sequencing and Systematizing of Information

Every organization must solve the problem of what pattern and content of communication shall be created, and what information shall be directed to which offices. There are limits to the amount and nature of information that can be received, processed and effectively handled by any one unit. The apparent absence of clear communication policy guidelines results in unduly large amounts of information being channelled to units at once, resulting in information overload.

2. 1.8 Uptake of Communication Technologies

The University uses a number of different communication technologies such as data-based reporting systems, e-mail, voice mail, intranet, bulletin boards, websites, and video conferencing. They are cost-effective in eliminating distance barriers and providing information to large numbers of people quickly. In spite of the robust ICT infrastructure in place, the uptake in use of these technologies by many members of the University community has not been impressive. The low uptake could be explained by people's preference for more personalized modes of communication.

2.1.9 Attitude Issues

The more traditional communication problems such as the manner in which messages are coded and receiver resistance to change, change initiatives often fail to meet their objectives. Some of the communication sent out is lofty, vague and impersonal to the extent that a message is never really understood and therefore fails to make the intended impact. Further, pervasive rumours and innuendos militate against desired changes in the University.

2.1.10 Fragmented Communication

Communication within the University tends to be fragmented in that it is perceived only as a tool rather than a thread within a system. At the same time, communication takes place in disparate and isolated ways rather than in a collaborative and well-coordinated way as a concerted effort geared towards achieving the overall goals of communication in the University.

3.0 COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

3.1 Principles of Good Communication Practice

Chuka University endeavours to provide its stakeholders with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, services and initiatives. In order to realize the University's communication goal, this policy will serve as a guide to all Chuka University fraternity and stakeholders in all communication matters. They will be adapted to suit the working environment and scenarios. The policy outlines the following core principles.

3.1.1 Efficiency

The University will ensure that all communication is effective and appropriate to the target recipients. The University will convey information and respond without undue delay to requests by the media and other stakeholders via appropriate communication channels.

3.1.2 Clarity

The University undertakes to transmit clear and uniform information that is not open to misinterpretation. The use of the University logo, corporate colours and publications will be purposed to reinforce clarity and authenticity.

3.1.3 Proactivity

The University will demonstrate leadership proactivity by actively seeking external contacts on areas of mutual interest in line with its vision and mission.

3.1.4 Transparency

Chuka University will endeavour to be as transparent and open as possible in its strategic communication. The reasons for any decisions made will be disclosed and there will be readiness on the part of the Management for open engagement and dialogue. Where information cannot be disclosed, the reasons for non-disclosure will be articulated.

3.1.5 Timeliness

The University will ensure that all information reaches the intended recipients at a time when it is needed, relevant and able to be interpreted in the correct context.

3.1.6 Cultural Awareness

As a national institution that is also international in character, CU will embrace and respect cultural diversity of all stakeholders in its communication endeavours.

3.1.7 Open Door Policy

Chuka University managers should strive to develop a system that enables them to be easily accessible to staff. For this to happen, managers are encouraged to either set open door times or to communicate their weekly diary to staff showing times they are available for consultation. Managers should also aim to regularly visit members of staff at their work places on informal

basis to discuss work-related issues. This will help to build mutual understanding and improve overall communication and decision-making within departments and the University.

3.1.8 Feedback

It is important that all staff are kept informed and updated as necessary by senior managers and supervisors. Where staff members have raised issues, made suggestions or forward ideas for change, CU Management should ensure they receive adequate feedback. Deans of Faculties, Directors, Heads of Departments and Section Heads therefore have a critical role in ensuring that feedback is provided on institutional and strategic issues, and on operational issues in the University.

3.2 Public Statements of Personal Opinion

Chuka university publics should refrain from making public statements of personal opinion regarding the University and from presenting a personal opinion regarding CU as a fact.

3.3 Duty of Loyalty

All staff and students have a duty of maintaining confidentiality and loyalty to the University, obligating employees not to compete with their employer, and prohibits them from disclosing or using the University's confidential material information to the employer's detriment. Chuka University extends this responsibility to each and every staff member, and requires all employees to act with good faith, honesty, and loyalty, and to avoid placing their own personal interests above those of the University. CU will provide factual, adequate and timely information to all stakeholders on all major events. The University will disclose necessary information that stakeholders would be interested in provided that:

a) Such information does not in any way interfere with the normal operations of the institution.
b) Such disclosure will not be in breach of the CU Act, Statutes, and other policies.
c) Such disclosure will not compromise CU's interests.

Where the need for disclosure is not clear, advice and approval will be sought from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.

From time to time, staff may in the line of duty access confidential University information. Such information must not be disclosed or used for purposes not originally intended. Where the said confidential information is conveyed to another party, the staff must ensure that the confidentiality of that information is protected. Obligating employees shall not compete with their employer and this policy therefore prohibits them from disclosing or using CU's confidential material information to the University's detriment. All staff members are expected to act in good faith, honesty, and loyalty, and to avoid placing their own personal interests above those of the University.

3.4 Responding to Rumours

In response to rumours, the Public Relations Office will verify in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor/CEO for more direction.

3.5 Reporting Significant Events

Legal actions, deaths, and unusual incidents

The Vice-Chancellor and other senior officers of the University must be informed immediately on all deaths and unusual incidents. The University lawyer must be immediately informed of all legal actions involving CU.

4.0 PUBLICS OF CHUKA UNIVERSITY

4.1 Internal Publics

4.1.1 Council and Senate
The University Council is the ultimate governing body of the University charged with the responsibility of overall policy formulation. Such policies are communicated to staff and students by the Vice-Chancellor. Senate decisions shall be communicated by the Vice-Chancellor.

4.1.2 Staff and Students
These are bonafide employees and students of Chuka University.

4.2 External Publics
4.2.1 Government of Kenya

4.2.2 Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology

4.2.3 Commission for University Education

4.2.4 Collaborating Institutions: Communication between the University and collaborating institutions shall be done through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Research and students Affairs.

4.2.5 Alumni: The University will communicate with its Alumni through the CU Alumni Association.

4.2.6 General Public

4.2.7 Media

4.2.8 Financial institutions

4.2.9 Other stakeholders

4.3 Media Relations
All media relations activities are coordinated and implemented by the Corporate Communication and Public Relations Office. Information will be generated, processed and disseminated through appropriate communication channels and in liaison with relevant University organs. All press releases, conferences and briefings must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor or authorized person(s). Chuka University will be impartial in releasing information to the different media outlets only at appropriate times.

This policy emphasizes that CU messages carried in the media are authentic. Therefore, the Public Relations/ Corporate Communications Office will seek to achieve this through: Maintaining a culture of open-door policy; addressing media enquiries; packaging information emanating from the University to make it newsworthy and current and providing accurate and objective information. CU will not commit itself to inaccurate and unfounded information. The University will at all times be obliged to give the correct position on any matter at hand.

4.4 CU Designated Spokesperson(s)

The designated person has a duty to speak truthfully and openly to the best of his/her knowledge regarding the University, subject to disclosure restrictions. As per CU Statutes, the Vice-Chancellor is the spokesperson of the University. The Head of PR/Corporate Communications is, by duty, an official spokesperson with authorization from the Vice-Chancellor. From time to time, the Vice-Chancellor may sanction other officers to be spokespersons.

a) Staff and students shall not respond to requests for information on behalf of the University from external sources unless with express permission from the Vice-Chancellor or Head of PR/Corporate Communications or other authorized persons.

b) All official policy inquiries or correspondences to and from foreign missions and subsequent response should be channelled through the Kenya Government Ministry in charge of Universities. The same procedure applies to other Ministries and international organizations. Staff and students are discouraged from directly corresponding with various arms and organs of Government without approval from the Vice-Chancellor.

c) Staff and students participating in external fora must ensure that any information that they divulge on CU is in compliance with this policy. They should contact the Head of PR/Corporate Communications if in doubt about the appropriateness of sharing certain information.

d) Authorized spokespersons shall be fully informed on all developments within the University that could potentially require external communication or response. It is the responsibility of CU Heads of Departments and sections to keep the spokespersons fully appraised on significant developments within the University.

e) Staff members participating in local and international conferences or writing editorial columns in news dailies about the University should inform the Vice-Chancellor prior to such engagements.

f) From time-to-time, senior officers and/or other subject-matter experts may be called upon to speak to the media regarding specific areas of responsibility or subject matter. These opportunities will be pre-arranged in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and PR and Corporate Communications Office.

5.0 TYPES AND METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

5.1 Internal Communication

Chuka University aims to facilitate efficient and effective internal communications among staff, students and all stakeholders so as to maintain a good and conducive working environment to enable the achievement of its Vision and Mission. To maintain a good working environment for the realization of its vision and mission, the University aims at facilitating efficient and effective internal communication to staff and students as well as to all its stakeholders. In this respect, it will utilize, but not limited to utilizing, these four communication channels:

a) Print media: newspaper articles and supplements, Chuka University newsletter, brochures and ad-hoc publications; these written communication materials will remain a vital component of communication in the University.

b) Broadcast: documentaries, podcasts, advertorials, interviews, and spots.

c) New media: web-based communication; controls on these will be professional at the level of content.

d) Interpersonal communication: face-to-face interactions.

All communication should be easy to understand and devoid of slang, obscene, offensive or discriminatory remarks, ethnic slurs, or sexist innuendoes. At the same time, the University shall promote e-learning as an avenue for disseminating educational content.

5.1.1 General Guidelines for Internal Communication

a) The University will encourage openness in internal communication and sharing of information unless the content of the message is deemed sensitive and is likely to compromise strong relations with stakeholders.

b) The University will be committed to consultation with staff and students over all affairs in a way that is consistent with good Management practices.

c) The University will seek to continuously improve customer care for students, particularly in the provision of information. Student needs and views shall be monitored through surveys, focus groups, liaison groups and committees.

d) All internal communications will be expressed in simple and clear language.

e) As a priority, staff and/or students will be informed about important University issues through their representatives before the same information is conveyed to the media or other external bodies.

5.1.2 Flow of Information

a) Communication will be two-way; encouraging dialogue and feedback at all levels.

b) Internal communication at all times will be championed by CU Management/leadership.

c) Effective communication will be a responsibility of every member of the CU fraternity.

d) Grapevine communication is part of the workplace and cannot be ignored. The University will encourage the office of the ombudsman/public complaints office to handle any emerging grievances.

5.2 Written Communication

Written communication will remain a vital component of communication in the University. All written communication should be simple and easy to understand, and devoid of slang, offensive, defamatory and discriminatory remarks, ethnic slurs, obscene and sexist innuendos.

a) the correct format of written documents will be used all the time. Official typeface is New Times Roman fount 12. Inclusion of the standard CU ISO certification logo in Chuka University write ups (Chuka University is ISO 9001: 2008 Certified   ).

b) The University will use letters, memos, minutes, circulars and any other appropriate form of written communication.

c) Letters used for internal communication will provide clear, exhaustive and accurate information. They will be dispatched in good time, and with confidentiality.

d) Memos will be drafted clearly and accurately and dispatched promptly, the recipient(s) and confidentiality status being clearly indicated.

e) Appropriate language style should be used in writing memos to avoid communication breakdown.

f) The standard format for writing minutes and reports will be observed.

g) Minutes once documented shall not be altered in for personal/departmental interests and concerns.

h) Minutes will be circulated within one week after the meeting.

i) All written communication shall be treated with integrity and confidentiality.

j) A copy of all written communication shall be filed both at the source and destination for future reference.

k) All notices shall be displayed conspicuously, in the right places.

5.3 Oral Communication

Oral communication implies communication through mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication. Face to face communication (meetings, lectures, conferences, interviews, etc.) is significant so as to build a rapport and trust.

5.3.1 Telephone

Participants shall be informed when a call is being monitored or recorded for the purpose of evaluating customer service, assessing workload or other University endeavours as permitted by law. University units shall provide an alternative method of doing business with the University to clients who do not wish to be part of a monitored telephone call.

a) The recommended procedure for handling incoming calls will be adhered to for both landline and mobile phone communication.

b) Mobile phone voice communication, where necessary, will be complimented with written communication.

c) Taken telephone messages should be well and correctly documented and delivered to the recipient as soon as possible.

5.3.2 Meetings

Faculties and all service departments should provide opportunities for all staff within to meet as often as it is necessary with a view to develop and foster good working relations and enhance effective communication. All staff should be updated on operational issues and strategic developments, which directly affect their work. During such meetings, opportunities should be provided for all staff to contribute equally and the agenda should be open to get input from the entire team.

a) The University will use meetings as forum for involving CU fraternity in decision making and problem solving.
b) The University will provide opportunities for all staff to contribute equally.
c) Meetings will be held at a time, and in a venue which allows and emboldens contribution.
d) The agenda items for a meeting will be communicated in time and open to input from the whole membership.
e) Notices of meetings will be sent in good time to give members ample time to prepare in order to make informed contributions.
f) Meetings will be effectively time managed and action focused as well as providing a forum for debate and discussion.
g) Information from meetings will be made available to relevant staff and feedback should be provided via the membership and chair to the broader community through appropriate communication channels.

5.3.3 Face-to-Face

a) The University recognizes the importance of face-to-face communication.
b) All University staff and students will be expected to respect one another and also stakeholders.

5.3.4 Communication for People with Disabilities

The University will create a work environment that is safe and supportive of people with disabilities. Alternative methods of communication will be provided to enable effective and efficient communication with people with disabilities such as braille and sign language.

5.3.5 Non-Verbal Communication

The University recognizes the use of non-verbal communication to reinforce, compliment, regulate and substitute verbal communication where necessary.

a) The University will promote corporate branding to create corporate image and identity.
b) Friday is designated a corporate day and all staff and students are encouraged to don University branded attire.
c) The use of University corporate identities such as logo and letterhead for personal purposes by staff and students is prohibited.

5.3.6 Electronic Communication

The University encourages the use of electronic communication and makes them widely available to the University publics. Nonetheless, the use of electronic communications is limited by restrictions that apply to all University property and any constraints necessary for the reliable operation of electronic communications systems and services. The University reserves the right to deny use of its electronic communication services when necessary to satisfy these restrictions and constraints. CU cannot and does not wish to be the arbiter of the contents of electronic communications. Neither can CU always protect users from receiving electronic messages they might find offensive.

Use of University electronic communication is allowable subject to the following conditions:

1. **Purpose.** Electronic communications will support and facilitate teaching, public service mission of the University, and of the administrative functions that support this mission.
2. **Non-competition.** Electronic communications shall not be provided for individual consumers or organizations outside the University except by approval from the Vice-Chancellor. Such services shall support the mission of the University and not be in competition with commercial providers.
3. **Restrictions.** University electronic communication may not be used for:
a) Unlawful activities.
b) E-mail and the web are the primary mode of electronic communication for all academic, administrative, clerical and technical staff.
c) CU's website (http://www.chuka.ac.ke) is a key platform for external communication. It will always be up-to-date, user friendly and while clearly communicating the University's Visions and Mission.
d) The Public Relations Office/Corporate Communication Office has the overall editorial responsibility for the University website.
e) Intranet and internet are also recognized as official means of communication.
f) The University e-mail address for staff shall be used for official communication at all times.
g) University e-mails will not be used for personal business or gain. Advertising or sponsorship within the University website is not permitted except where such is clearly related to or supports the mission of the University.
h) The University encourages all staff to respond to incoming e-mail messages appropriately and timely.
i) University academic staff members are encouraged to use e-mail for communication with students on academic purposes.
j) IT access will made available to the widest possible number of staff.
k) The University shall embrace the use of social media, blogging and micro-blogging for communication purposes, particularly from senior Management to external community and students.

l) The University shall encourage the generation of general podcasts and video clips for marketing and enhancing the corporate image. However, these must be authorized by the Public Relations/ Corporate Communications Office.

4. **Retention:** Electronic communications records are subject to University Records Management policies which provide guidelines for administering the retention and disposal of all records, regardless of the medium on which they are stored.

5.3.7 E-newsletters

E-newsletters shall be removed after 36 months. The oldest e-newsletter will removed each time the latest is added at the start of each month.

5.4 External Communication

Written communication for example letters, E-mail, print and electronic advertisements and the web are the primary modes of electronic communication and constitute a key platform for external communication. The Corporate Communication and Public Relations Office shall have the overall editorial responsibility for all University websites. The content of the University web pages should always be up-to-date, user-friendly and regulated to conform to the objectives of the University. The content must meet the set standard for web publishing as defined in the Chuka University ICT Policy. Further, the University shall encourage the use of email as stipulated in the University ICT Policy as a way of engaging with external stakeholders. At the same time, the University shall encourage the generation of general podcasts and video clips for marketing and enhancing its corporate image; however, these must be authorized by the Vice-Chancellor.

5.4.1 Social Media Platforms

To strengthen its communication mechanisms, CU will actively stamp its presence on the various social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram, blogs and twitter. These platforms will be overseen by the PR/Corporate Communication Department which will continuously provide accurate, timely and objective information to the target audiences. Meanwhile, access to information technology (IT) shall be made available to more staff, while the University shall embrace the use of social media and blogging by the University community to the external stakeholders.

5.4.2 Public Lectures and Symposia

Public lectures are tools of delivery and engagement with external audiences. It is envisaged that the University shall continue to attract prominent personalities and international academics wishing to interact and discourse with the University community. These engagements are critical to the enhancement of the image of the University.

5.4.3 Meetings

The University uses meetings—such as courtesy calls, meetings with collaborating institutions, staff meetings, and governance and Management meetings—to communicate with stakeholders. Given the importance of meetings for sharing of and passing on information, the University will regulate meetings to ensure that the agenda, lists of participants, timing, and minutes or records are available, as it is appropriate to good communication practice.

5.5 Corporate Advertising and Presentation

The University shall utilize print, electronic, and other support media for corporate advertising to promote a consistent positive image and corporate narrative. This shall be achieved by adhering to the following:

a) All University advertising requests shall be coordinated by the PR/Corporate Communication Office after approval by the Vice-Chancellor/CEO or authorized staff.

b) All advertising engagements and commitments with media shall be solely executed by the Corporate Communication and Public Relations (CCPR) Office. The office shall also ensure that all advertisements are consistent with the University corporate identity. Proposed advertisements and information shall be received by CCPR Office a week before the advert is run.

c) The use of the University name and logo in advertising by collaborating institutions without approval from the Vice-Chancellor is prohibited and shall be subjected to legal action.

d) Production of promotional University items shall at all times reflect the correct institutional name and logo. Where there are uncertainties, the concerned parties shall consult with the CCPR office.

e) Staff and students that are scheduled to appear on any Chuka University publicity materials must sign a consent form before engagement. For a minor the parents or guardians consent shall be sought first.

f) As mandated, exhibitions shall be organized and coordinated by the Public Relations Office. University staff and students attending exhibitions will be required at all times to represent the University in a manner to build and sustain good reputation.

5.6 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is a way through which CU will achieve a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives ("Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach"), while at the same time addressing the expectations of her publics.

Guidelines for Corporate Social Responsibility.

a) The CCPR office shall identify appropriate social endeavours in line with the University's mission.

b) The Head of CCPR shall forward the different identified social endeavors to the Vice-Chancellor for deliberation and approval.

c) The CCPR office shall solicit for various resources internally for mounting the operation.

d) The CCPR office shall implement the social intervention in liaison with relevant departments or institutions.

5.7 Crisis Communication
Guidelines for Crisis Communication
   a) The University is devoted to taking a proactive approach to crisis Management through a comprehensive risk analysis.
   b) No one is authorized to submit information to the news media without clearance from the Vice-Chancellor.
   c) The Public Relations/Corporate Communications Office will monitor local and international news events and advice the Vice-Chancellor on issues and/or trends relevant to the University.

5.71. Crisis Response
When a crisis occurs, the PR Office/Corporate Communications Secretariat will assess its severity and develop strategies to deal with it. The Vice-Chancellor shall make appropriate communication to relevant stakeholders in such an event.

5.7.2 Crisis Communication Management Team (CCMT)
In the event of a crisis, the University Crisis Management Communication Team shall consist of; the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Head of PR/Corporate Communications, Dean of Students, Chief Security Officer, Chief Medical Officer, and other co-opted members as the situation may demand. The CCMT shall constantly monitor and manage issues with potential to escalate into crisis. The team shall gather factual information about the crisis and approve strategies for internal and external communication. The Public Relations Office/Corporate Communications Office shall be the Teams Secretariat.

5.7.3 Crisis Management Plan
A Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is a reference tool, not a blueprint. A Crisis Management Plan will provide lists of key contact information, reminders of what typically should be done in a crisis, and forms to be used to document the crisis response. A CMP will save time during a crisis by pre-assigning some tasks, pre-collecting some information, and serving as a reference source. Pre-assigning tasks presumes there is a designated crisis team. The team members are expected to know what tasks and responsibilities they have during a crisis.

5.7.4 Releasing Information during Crisis
The Vice-Chancellor will release relevant, appropriate and verifiable information to the news media regarding any crisis. The Corporate Communication and Public Relations Office shall continually monitor media coverage and respond accordingly as approved by the Vice-Chancellor. When releasing information, the University shall adhere to the following:
   a) Where a determination has been made to disclose material information, such information will immediately be broadly disclosed to the public via news releases.
   b) Disclosure must include any information the omission of which would make the rest of the disclosure misleading (half-truths can be misleading).

c) Disclosure in the CU website does not by itself constitute adequate disclosure of material information.

d) Disclosure must be corrected if the University subsequently learns that earlier disclosure of the University contained a material error at the time it was given.

5.7.5 Recovery from Crisis

a) The University will provide stress and trauma counselling to crisis victims as the situation demands.

b) The University through the PR/Corporate Communications office will keep stakeholders updated on the progression of crisis recovery efforts including any corrective or disciplinary measures being taken.

c) The University will analyze and learn positively from crisis Management efforts and integrate the lessons to the institution's crisis Management system.

The Corporate Communication Office shall:

a) have a crisis management plan and update it at least annually;

b) have a designated Crisis Management Team that is properly trained on crisis management;

c) conduct exercises at least annually to test the Crisis Management Plan and Team;

d) pre-draft select crisis management messages including content for dark web sites and templates for crisis statements. The legal department shall review and pre-approve these messages for conformity with the law.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Effective Implementation

For effective implementation, the University Management Board Members and Public Relations/Corporate Communications Head shall lead the sensitization training on the new communication policy. The correlation of this policy with other University policies shall be clearly spelt out during the training. Subsequently, CU Management shall provide resources for this training.

6.2 Communication Responsibilities for All CU Publics

All CU publics have a responsibility to exhibit and uphold the institutional standards in communication. Specifically, all staff:

  a) shall be aware of the Communications Policy and demonstrate the principles of good practice;
  b) are responsible for ensuring that they communicate effectively via appropriate designated communication channels;
  c) shall be aware of the various techniques of communication and utilize them appropriately in their work;
  d) shall tackle incidents of poor communication in a proactive and constructive way;
  e) shall ensure that work related information is shared openly, appropriately and in a timely manner;

In addition, supervisory and Management staff shall:

  a) ensure that communication systems and processes actively support the vision and mission of the University at all times;
  b) demonstrate good practice in all aspects of communication;
  c) provide staff and students with timely and appropriate feedback through two-way communication;
  d) support and promote a communication culture that encourages inclusion and involvement of all target publics;
  e) ensure all staff members understand the strategic direction of Chuka University;
  f) regularly review and seek to enhance the University's approach to strategic communication.

Responsibilities

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for:

  i) Reviewing, endorsing and achieving this policy's aims.

The head of PR/ Corporate Communication is responsible for:

  ii) Administering this policy on behalf of the CEO; and ensuring that this policy and supporting strategies and procedures are distributed, implemented and complied with. Developing and rolling out the supporting strategies.

The PR/Corporate Communications Team is responsible for:

iii)   Supporting head of PR in implementing the policy.

Faculty Deans, Directors, CoDs, and Section Heads are responsible for:

iv)   Implementing and enforcing the processes and procedures;
      Leading by example in protecting the Chuka University brand and communicating effectively;
      Ensure that members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive appropriate training.

All Chuka University employees are responsible for:

v)   Carrying out their work in line with this policy and associated procedures;
      Challenging any behaviour that falls short of the expectations of this policy; and
      Identifying any breaches of this policy and reporting them to their immediate supervisors.

7.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 Mandate

The Public Relations / Corporate Communications Office shall:
   a) incorporate strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of this policy;
   b) undertake regular checks and annual evaluation on implementation of the policy;
   c) use the evaluation reports to define short term and long term requirements for effective implementation;
   d) use the information for planning and management.
   e) suggest possible areas for review;
   f) The University Management shall provide the requisite resources for monitoring and evaluation.

7.2 Review of the Policy

To be in tandem with the emerging international trends in Corporate Communication and Public Relations and to enhance uniformity with national and international higher education aims, this policy will be appraised after every five (5) years.

REFERENCES

1. Cardiff University Communication Policy
2. Chuka University Charter
3. Chuka University ICT Policy
4. Chuka University Strategic Plan 2017-2022
5. Chuka University Quality Manual 2016
6. Daystar University draft communication policy.
7. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Communications Policy 2011
8. Maseno University PR operating procedures manual
9. University of California, Electronic Communications Policy
10. University of Nairobi Communications Policy 2014

Appendix A

MEDIA CONSENT FORM (A) - MINORS

Consent to photograph / videotape / audiotape / film / interview individuals

AUTHORIZATION

I hereby grant Chuka University:
1. The right to take, reproduce, use, exhibit, display, publish, broadcast, distribute and create photographs and/or photographic, film or videotaped images of the student named below at no fee; and
2. The right to use personal information identifying the student named below in connection with the activities of the University in the student's school or for promoting, publicizing, or explaining the University or its activities. This grant includes, without limitation, the right to publish such images and personal information in the Chuka University newsletter, alumni/ae magazine, on the University's internet website, and in public relations/promotional materials, such as marketing and admissions publications, videotapes, advertisements, fundraising materials and any other University-related publication. These images of and/or personal information about the student may appear in any of the wide variety of formats and media available to the University now or in the future, including but not limited to print, broadcast, videotape, digital, CD-ROM and/or electronic/online or internet media.

Name of student:…………………………...Registration Number:………………

Signature of Parents or Legal Guardian(s):…………………………………………

Address…………………………………………..Date:……………………..

NOTE: This form is intended to obtain authorization from parent(s) or legal guardians of a minor public or private school student (1) to take, use and publish photographic images of the student on the University/College website or in University/College publications and (2) to use personally identifiable information such as name, address, parents' names, etc. in the same manner.

MEDIA CONSENT FORM (B) OVER 18 YEARS

Consent to photograph / videotape / audiotape / film / interview individuals

AUTHORIZATION

I, _____, grant Chuka University permission to record my likeness and voice on a video, audio, photographic, digital, electronic or any other medium (collectively referred to as 'the recordings'). I acknowledge that all rights, title, and interest to the recordings will belong to Chuka University at no fee.

The University may use my name in connection with these recordings. The University may also use, reproduce, exhibit or distribute in any medium (e.g. print publications, videotapes, online) these recordings for any purpose that Chuka University, and those acting pursuant to its authority, deem appropriate, including promotional or advertising efforts. These recordings will be placed in the Chuka University archives.

I also allow Chuka University to publish the text and/or transcript of my remarks. Publication includes print publications, video footages and online distribution.

Name………………………………Registration Number……………………

Signature…………………………………………...Date………………………….

Please return this form to:

Chuka University
Public Relations Office
P.O. Box 109-60200,
Chuka.

pro@chuka.ac.ke