

MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of creating a formal LACERA media policy is to ensure that the policies of the Boards of Retirement and Investments are accurately transmitted and explained to legitimate representatives of the mass media. The same policy will serve as a guide for communications with all outside parties, including the Board of Supervisors, Chief Administrative Officer, County departments, employee organizations, and other industry groups.

LACERA STAFF:

The general spokesperson for LACERA is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is authorized to respond to legitimate inquiries by relaying any policy officially adopted by the Board(s). This includes making available any documents which have been presented to the Board(s) and are therefore matters of public record.

Neither the CEO, nor any other LACERA employee, is authorized to speculate as to the intent or motivations of a Board or staff member. Personal opinions are to be avoided whenever possible. When a personal opinion is provided, discretion is to be utilized and the opinion is to be so identified to the inquiring party.

On Board of Investment policies and practices, the Chief Investment Officer (CIO) is the primary spokesperson. The CIO's discretion and restrictions are the same as those mentioned above.

The Assistant Executive Officer (AEO) is the primary spokesperson for Board of Retirement policies and practices and general administrative and benefits issues. The same discretionary authority and restrictions apply to the AEO.

On occasion, the CEO, CIO or AEO may designate a particular staff member as the sole and exclusive contact for a particular issue. Such designations will be made only to senior staff members who are technically proficient with respect to the subject of the designation and who possess the maturity and discretion to effectively deal with media representatives.

As a general rule, LACERA staff members will not initiate any mass media contact without specific Board direction. Written press releases should be referred to the respective Board Chairman for review. All media contacts will be reported to the Board immediately using E-mail or fax and as part of the Staff Activity Report.

LACERA BOARD MEMBERS:

In order to achieve the purposes of the press policy, Board members should be encouraged to refer inquiries to the appropriate staff spokesperson unless a Board spokesperson has been designated.

In the event that a Board member does respond to a media inquiry, discretion should be utilized to limit the discussion to formally approved Board policy. Personal opinions and speculation as to the motivations of any Board or staff member are to be avoided. Any personal opinion given is to be clearly identified as such.

As a courtesy to other Board members, all such contacts should be reported to the Board(s) concerned at the earliest opportunity.

All Board contacts with outside parties, in which LACERA policies and practices are discussed, should be conducted in accordance with the intent of this policy.

RESPONSES TO MEDIA REPORTS:

Generally, LACERA representatives will not initiate contacts with the media. News stories related to LACERA, even when positive in content, often provoke consternation and concern among our participants and beneficiaries. However, if a news story contains clearly inaccurate information, authorized LACERA representatives will contact the author and/or publication responsible for the inaccuracy in order to request a correction. Such instances shall be reported to the LACERA Boards.

Editorials or opinion pieces will be addressed as necessary by "letters to editor." Such communications will be submitted to the Board for approval prior to their release.

Executive Office staff will prepare position papers on media articles for staff to use when responding to member inquiries. Copies of these "position papers" will also be provided to Board members.

ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE AND OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS:

Board members and staff representing LACERA at conferences and other public meetings should remember that reporters often attend such events. When making presentations or participating in discussions at such events, care should be taken not to speculate about past or future Board actions. Moreover, the expression of personal opinions should be avoided. If a personal opinion is given, it should be clearly identified as such. If media representatives are present when a LACERA representative makes a presentation, copies of the presentation materials should be provided to all Board members.

LACERA REPORT OF MEDIA CONTACT

Prepared By: _____

Date of Contact: _____

Reporter's Name: _____

Reporter's Phone Number: _____

Reporter's Employer: _____

Where Will the Story Be Aired? _____

When Will the Story Appear? _____

Is the Story for an Opinion Piece or a News Story?

What Prompted the Reporter's Interest?

What Topics Were Covered by the Reporter?

Distribution: Members of the Board of Retirement
 Members of the Board of Investments
 Chief Executive Officer
 Assistant Executive Officers
 Chief Counsel
 Chief Financial Officer