



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
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ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-1300

USNAINST 5720.3F
4/PAO

24 OCT 2011

USNA INSTRUCTION 5720.3F

From: Superintendent

Subj: PUBLIC AFFAIRS INSTRUCTION

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5720.44B, Department of the Navy Public Affairs Instruction
(b) SECNAVINST 5720.42F, Department of the Navy Freedom of Information Action (FOIA)
(c) SECNAVINST 5211.5E, Department of the Navy Privacy Act (PA) Program
(d) DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation
(e) USNAINST 5290.2C, Photographic Services Instruction
(f) USNAINST 5600.8, Printing and Publications Instruction
(g) Directive- Type Memorandum (DTM) 09-026: official policy on social media, 25 Feb 2010
(h) ALNAV 056/10 and 057/10
(i) Social Media Handbook <http://www.slideshare.net/USNavySocialMedia/sm-handbook-print>

1. Purpose

a. To provide public affairs policy and define roles at the United States Naval Academy (USNA) and to issue guidance for the release of information in accordance with reference (a).

b. To outline proper procedures and guidelines relating to media operations, community relations, internal information, photographic services, publications, public web pages, and social media sites.

2. Cancellation. USNA Instruction 5720.3E. This directive is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

3. Policy. Public affairs is a command function at USNA that involves Midshipmen, faculty and staff members. An important aspect of fulfilling the mission of USNA is our ability to communicate effectively to the Brigade, faculty, staff, the American public, and other audiences. USNA Public Affairs Office is an essential component in mission accomplishment, providing strategic counsel, operational planning, and tactical execution of communication as a function of USNA mission and objectives.

4. Public Affairs Office. The Public Affairs Office, under the guidance of the Public Affairs Officer (PAO), directs the USNA public affairs program. The PAO is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing a vigorous and effective public affairs program in the areas of media operations, community relations, internal information, visual information, publications, public web page, and social networking site content.

5. Definitions

a. Official Communication. Official communication includes comments, interviews, letters, written or verbal statements, and release of photos or videos that state or represent official USNA, Department of Navy (DON) or Department of Defense (DOD) policy, or could be perceived by a reasonable person as representing these institutions. Official communication to the public must come from or be coordinated through the PAO, with exception for members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team during business meetings, briefings, and other restricted venues that fall outside the scope of the media and general public and do not require PAO coordination.

b. Unofficial Communication. Unofficial communication includes personal communication in the public domain that includes personal comments, interviews, letters, internet posts, written or verbal statements,

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and release of photos or videos that are clearly the opinion of the author and would be perceived by a reasonable person as a personal view rather than articulation of a policy. USNA personnel who chose to interact with media must realize their public comments, even though personal in nature, can sometimes be construed - either intentionally or unintentionally - to represent DON or USNA. It is important when interacting with media in an unofficial capacity to clearly state that all opinions expressed are understood to be personal and do not necessarily represent the views of the DON or USNA.

6. Responsibilities

a. The PAO is USNA's release authority and spokesperson for all official written, photographic, and electronic information or material intended for release to the media on behalf of USNA as an institution. The PAO may ask subject matter experts to represent the Academy in an official capacity as representatives of USNA in order to best answer media queries.

b. All divisions, departments, duty officers, and offices at USNA and Naval Support Activity (NSA) Annapolis will keep the PAO informed in a timely manner about any events or issues which could affect operation of USNA or could generate public interest. Members of the public affairs office shall be offered maximum access to information, reports, events, meetings, and buildings/office spaces when performing duties in an official capacity.

c. All hands shall notify the Public Affairs Office upon receipt of a media query or interview request for comment in their official capacity as a Midshipman, USNA staff, or faculty member.

d. The PAO is charged with briefing the Superintendent on events and issues which may be the subject of media queries. All hands shall assist the PAO by providing copies of briefs, reports, or other requested information to be compiled into the Superintendent's media preparation binder.

e. Prior to responding to media queries, the PAO shall gather key facts and background pertaining to the issue. All hands shall assist the PAO by providing accurate, timely, and complete information as requested, to be used for the purpose of preparing an appropriate response.

f. Midshipmen fall on a fine line between public and private figures where their actions and words are often viewed as representing USNA as an institution. Midshipmen are often viewed as representatives of the Academy and are held to a high standard by the American public. Because of this, great care must be exercised in all personal public communication as defined in paragraph 5.

7. Media Operations. The PAO and the Media Operations Director will support a proactive media engagement plan to help build and maintain key relationships with members of the mass media. They will provide timely and accurate information to local and national audiences through the news media, ensuring both internal and external audiences receive information in accordance with applicable laws, and federal, DOD, and DON regulations and policies.

a. Response to Query from Media Representatives. The authority to release official information to the media on behalf of the Naval Academy rests with the PAO. Military and civilian employees at USNA are directed to refer all calls or requests for official information from the media to the Media Operations Branch of the Public Affairs Office. All release of information will be in accordance with references (a) through (c).

b. News Releases. News releases about USNA events, activities, and personnel will be made only by the PAO. USNA departments are encouraged to advise the PAO of newsworthy events or breaking news. The Media Operations Branch will coordinate release with the appropriate division, branch, or office involved. The PAO also coordinates the Hometown News Release Program for members of the faculty, staff, and Brigade of Midshipmen.

c. Media Access. As a matter of policy, media have the same access to Navy facilities as do members of the general public. Although media are required to coordinate with PAO in advance for

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requests for USNA access or interviews, it is important to realize USNA personnel may be quoted or photographed at any event open to the public.

(1) Any facility or building which is off-limits to the general public is off limits to media. Exceptions may be authorized by the PAO in consultation with the cognizant USNA staff member; in which case media will be escorted while in the specific facility. Unless accompanied by a member of the Public Affairs Office, the following areas are off limits to media:

- (a) Bancroft Hall, other than the Rotunda and Memorial Hall.
- (b) Academic and professional training facilities, including classrooms and laboratories.
- (c) King Hall Dining Facility.
- (d) Administrative buildings.
- (e) Athletic buildings.
- (f) Nimitz Library.
- (g) Yard Patrol Craft.
- (h) Cutter Shed.
- (i) Sailing Vessels.
- (j) Medical/Dental Facilities.
- (k) On-base Residences.

(2) Photos or video of injured personnel and individuals under medical care. When approved for media access to public events, photographers will not be blocked from taking photos of injuries; however, to ensure privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations are followed, media must receive written consent from USNA public affairs to use the photos.

d. Publicity for personal projects. Staff and faculty desiring to publicize their personal projects, books, videos, or other non-work related material on the Yard must adhere to the Joint Ethics Regulation (reference (d)) for consideration of requests by Non-Federal Entities (NFE). Subject reference states: non-federal entities are prohibited from using DOD personnel in their official capacities, DOD resources that may be identified as a DOD resource, or any images of such personnel and resources, in commercial, advertising, marketing, or promotional activities. DOD resources include any DOD images of DOD personnel in their military uniform or any distinctive part of a military uniform, and DOD materiel, insignia, seals, medals, logos, or any similar items. Non-federal entities should not use images of identifiable persons, including DOD personnel, without obtaining permission from those persons for use of their image in commercial, advertising, marketing, or promotional activities. Such images include DOD imagery that is publicly available, such as on any DOD website. When NFEs use any images that may appear to be identified with the DOD or any of its Components in commercial, advertising, marketing, or promotional activities, they should include, in a reasonably prominent position and easily readable type size, a disclaimer that neither the DOD nor any of its components endorse the NFE or the product, service, or event.

e. Unsolicited media queries:

(1) At public events. During events open to the public, the media is free to ask questions of any participant or guest, including times when unescorted by a PAO. If asked for a comment during a public event, it is a personal decision whether to answer or not. USNA personnel who choose to comment must follow the guidelines for personal public communication and licensing or ethical limitations for certain specialties. If one does not desire to comment, it is always appropriate to say "I'd rather not comment on that topic but please call the PAO at 410-293-2292 or pao@usna.edu."

(2) Via phone, letter, or email. The Naval Academy's public affairs office is available to offer assistance and advice to Midshipmen, faculty, or staff when they are contacted by news media. This assistance and advice is particularly important for individuals who do not routinely communicate with media, do not wish to respond to media, or may lack perspective on issues of potential media interest. Additionally, those personnel who do not wish to engage with media can refer all media requests to the Public Affairs Office.

8. Proactive personal communication

a. Communication is a team effort, and every member of USNA has a role in telling the Naval Academy's story from their unique perspective.

b. To continue to attract the best and brightest candidates for admission, USNA personnel must proactively articulate the Academy's mission in communities with little or no historic connection to the military or USNA. There are potentially hundreds of millions of Americans (especially outside the states of Maryland and Virginia) who are unfamiliar with the incredible talent and accomplishments seen here on the Yard every day. Ways to proactively communicate this message can be found in the Strategic Communication Guide or by contacting the Public Affairs Office.

c. In most situations, individuals are free to address news media in a personal capacity in accordance with paragraph 5 of this instruction - either initiating or returning contact with reporters - and can do so without approval from their chain of command. However, there are specific situations, such as an ongoing official investigation or judicial proceeding, classified information, and political activity where Navy policy specifically limits public comment. It is imperative during such situations to obtain the assistance of the Public Affairs Office when contacted by reporters.

d. Midshipmen, faculty, or staff may interact with news media, but are strongly encouraged to contact the Public Affairs Office prior to doing so. Each individual is responsible for his/her comments in all public forums and interaction with the media. Posting one's opinion online is the same as speaking to a reporter; if it violates the law, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and/or DON policy, the initiator can be held accountable.

e. Specific personal communication guidelines from references (a) and (e) through (h):

(1) If an individual's communication identifies them as a member of the military, it should clearly state the opinions are theirs as an individual and do not represent DOD, DON, or USNA and its policies. The following is an example of an appropriate disclaimer: "All views expressed and comments provided today are my own thoughts and opinions based on my professional and academic experience and expertise, and do not constitute nor should they be construed as reflecting DOD, DON, or USNA policy or endorsement."

(2) Personnel can express their political views on public issues or political candidates online, but not as part of an organized communication campaign.

(3) Individuals cannot solicit votes for or against a party, candidate, or cause.

(4) Individuals cannot participate in any interview or discussion as an advocate for or against a party, candidate, or cause.

(5) Commissioned officers and Midshipmen must avoid contemptuous remarks against their chain of command. The chain of command consists of other Midshipmen, officers and civilian officials, including the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, and Governor and Legislature of any state in which the officer or Midshipman resides or visits.

(6) Do not express or imply DON or Marine Corps endorsement of any opinions, products, or causes.

9. Special relationships

a. The following organizations are responsible for their own organic public affairs operations; though they should avoid addressing USNA policy, mission, academics, or admissions.

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(1) Naval Academy Athletics. Information about intercollegiate athletics is normally released by the Naval Academy Athletic Association (NAAA) Sports Information Office, under the cognizance of the Director of Athletics.

(2) Armel-Leftwich Visitor Center. Operated under the auspices of the Naval Academy Business Service Division (NABSD), the Visitor Center is authorized to handle its own promotion, advertising, and publicity, keeping the Public Affairs Office informed.

(3) Naval Academy Sailing Squadron. Public information activities of the Naval Academy Sailing Squadron, including sail training and competition involving Midshipmen, will be coordinated and executed by the Commodore of the Naval Academy Sailing Squadron, keeping the Public Affairs Office informed.

b. Naval Academy Alumni Association. The Alumni Association is entrusted with special access to numerous events where the lines between personal and official communication are often difficult to discern.

(1) For an event or interview where the Alumni Association has the same access as credentialed media, approval to post information gathered is not required from the PAO. This includes times when Midshipmen are speaking in a personal capacity about their experiences, opinions, or views outside of official USNA functions.

(2) For events where the Association has special access to personnel, proceedings, or locations not normally offered to media, the PAO must approve release of the information gathered. This includes events where Midshipmen participation is scripted or staged as part of promotion, fundraising, advertising, or recruiting, and when Midshipmen are speaking or acting in an official capacity as representatives of the Naval Academy.

c. Contracted vendors, photographers, and videographers must follow guidelines set forth by the PAO and shall not release information unless approved or previously released by the PAO.

d. Multimedia Support Center (MSC). MSC is contracted by the USNA Academic Department and should be given full access similar to members of the public affairs organization.

10. Community Relations. Community relations includes the set of programs designed to create goodwill and maintain a positive image of DON and USNA in the local community, and in specific targeted national and international regions. This may include tours; Speakers Bureau; community action and humanitarian assistance projects by the Midshipman Action Group and liaison with Chambers of Commerce; schools; centers of influence, business, and government organizations. Effective community relations is benefited by a coordinated effort on the part of all USNA and NSA Annapolis officials to ensure the public is addressed in a consistent manner. Consultation by the Community Relations Director will be provided upon request.

a. Speakers Bureau. The Community Relations Director manages a Speakers Bureau by determining eligibility and scheduling speakers on a variety of subjects. Speakers address clubs and organizations primarily in the local area. Individuals who receive a request for a speaker or those who wish to support requests for speaking engagements should contact the Community Relations Director for assistance and coordination.

b. Community Action Projects. Community action projects provide benefits to the community and reemphasize the notion of service to participating Midshipmen, faculty, and staff. These projects can generate a great deal of good will, often maximized with attending publicity. Project originators should coordinate with the Community Relations Director, who will coordinate media coverage through the PAO/Media Operations as desired.

11. Internal Information. The PAO will assist USNA leadership in maintaining morale and esprit de corps of USNA Midshipmen, faculty, and staff through an internal information program designed to increase

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awareness of Naval Academy and Naval service policies and programs. The weekly command newspaper, The Trident, is the Naval Academy's primary means of conveying internal information. Items published should be relevant to faculty, staff, and the Brigade of Midshipmen, parents, and other ancillary audiences. Story ideas, news, briefs, photographs, and publication of other information may be coordinated with The Trident editor. Specific journalistic formats and deadlines are required. USNA and NSA Annapolis organizations are encouraged to appoint a collateral duty PAO to facilitate publication of organizational information in The Trident.

12. Photography. The PAO and the Photography Director will help promote the Naval Academy story to the American people and the media through an accurate and timely visual information program.

a. Current imagery will be made available to a variety of users in support of USNA's mission. The Photography Lab, in accordance with reference (e), provides photographic services to official USNA events and activities, including official portraits and official government passports photos. All video products intended for public dissemination, developed by the Public Affairs Office or USNA MSC will be cleared for release by the PAO.

b. Photography by visitors, guests, and contractors. When in areas open to the general public for visitation (Tecumseh Court, Memorial Hall, etc.), visitors, guests, and contractors may take photos for use as they desire. However, when granted special access by virtue of their position as a guest or contractor (e.g. food service and maintenance workers in Bancroft Hall, and guests allowed into classroom or lab areas), all photos taken in areas not open to the public must be approved by the PAO if desired for public release.

13. Publications. Publications are a significant means to communicate mission-essential information to a number of audiences. In accordance with reference (f), all publications used to recruit students or to provide information about the Academy to the public must be coordinated with the PAO. The PAO and the Publications Director will incorporate USNA strategic communication objectives into all programs, brochures, and catalogs designed to increase awareness and convey command information. They will ensure all USNA publications for public dissemination reflect quality, contain a consistent message, and support the public's understanding of the Academy's mission. On a limited, not-to-interfere basis, the Publications Director may provide design consultation to other USNA organizations upon request. Generally, production costs are assumed by the requesting USNA organization.

14. Internet. USNA internet policy is dependent upon the specific website in use: official USNA websites, supplemental USNA websites, and personal websites.

a. Official USNA websites. The PAO will manage and oversee all content on Naval Academy publicly accessible web sites, with exception of the organizations listed in paragraph 9, ensuring timely and accurate information is available to the public. USNA organizations shall obtain approval from PAO before posting any official communication or USNA material on external USNA web sites or the world wide web. USNA's Information Technology Services Division provides technical support and maintenance of all websites and manages content for USNA internal web sites.

(1) Official sites include:

- (a) www.USNA.edu (managed by PAO)
- (b) www.facebook.com/usnavalacademy (managed by PAO)
- (c) www.navysports.com (managed by NAAA)
- (d) www.navyonline.com (managed by NABSD)

(2) In accordance with reference (g), official use of social media is a public affairs function; thus any official command use of social media must remain in compliance with Navy public affairs policy. In accordance with reference (h), official internet posts involve content that has been released in an official

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capacity by DON public affairs personnel or commanders designated as releasing authorities. Individuals may repost this information to other social media sites as desired.

b. Supplemental USNA websites maintained in an official capacity. The expansion and ease of social media makes it impossible for the Public Affairs Staff to monitor, review, and approve all websites and posts by groups within the Naval Academy lifelines. As such, groups such as club and intramural sports, ECAs, advocacy groups, musical, and other performing groups, will be defined as "Supplemental USNA websites maintained in an official capacity."

(1) Official uses of internet-based capabilities, unrelated to public affairs, are permitted. However, because these interactions take place in a public venue, personnel acting in their official capacity shall maintain liaison with public affairs and operations security staff to ensure organizational awareness.

(2) These groups do not require PAO approval for posting news, calendars, photos, and videos; however, they are required to consult the Strategic Communication Guide for all posts and abide by DOD and DON guidance for official internet publications, including:

(a) Ensure that the information posted is relevant and accurate, and does not include sensitive or internal information not approved for public release, including personally identifiable information, internal USNA policies, FOUO information, and internal business practices.

(b) Provide links to official DOD content hosted on official DOD references and websites where applicable.

(c) Include a disclaimer when personal opinions are expressed (e.g., "This statement is my own and does not constitute an endorsement by or opinion of the Department of Defense.").

c. Personal websites and individual posts in a personal capacity. Per the guidelines provided in references (h) and (i), DON personnel are encouraged to responsibly engage in unofficial internet posting about the Navy and USNA. "Unofficial internet posts" are defined as any content about the Navy or USNA that is posted on any internet site by DON personnel in an unofficial and personal capacity. Content includes, but is not limited to, personal comments, photographs, video, and graphics. Internet sites include working sites, blogs, forums, photo- and video-sharing sites, and other sites, to include sites not owned, operated, or controlled by the Navy or DOD. Unofficial internet posts are not endorsed by any part of the DON or reviewed within any official DON approval process, but must still follow applicable UCMJ regulations, USNA instructions, and all other provisions of this instruction.

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S. S. VAHSEN
Chief of Staff

Distribution:
All Non Mids (electronically)