Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST)

Media Interaction Policy

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LPM-112

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(updated version of document submitted to CCB)

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## Change Record

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/17/2007</td>
<td>Initial version as Document-3604</td>
<td>Suzanne Jacoby</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11/21/2013</td>
<td>Elevated to controlled document handle. Expanded existing press release policy to include roles, responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for how LSST team members should handle all media interactions.</td>
<td>Robert McKercher</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2019/06/21</td>
<td>Updated section 2.3.2 to indicate type of approved materials Changed Communications Officer (CO) to Communications Manager (CM) throughout document Interactions form changed to <a href="mailto:communications-team@lists.lsst.org">communications-team@lists.lsst.org</a> Other general updates</td>
<td>Ranpal Gill</td>
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The LSST Media Interaction Policy

Summary

The LSST Press Interaction Policy describes the roles, responsibilities and procedures for handling press releases and media information requests. A principal goal of LSST media interaction is to increase understanding of LSST and its mission, and well-coordinated media relations programs help earn public and stakeholder trust and support of the project. The provisions of this policy are intended to ensure public dissemination of timely, accurate, and appropriate information.

Ultimate responsibility for clearance of releasable information to the media rests with the LSST Director. Whenever possible, media interactions should be undertaken by the Director or the LSST Project Manager. As circumstances dictate, they may delegate interactions to individuals with subject area expertise. The LSST Communications Manager (CM) is responsible for coordinating media interaction, including announcements, press releases, or press conferences. All individuals working on the LSST project and receiving compensation from LSST funds are responsible for providing only accurate and appropriate information when interacting with the media regarding their project activities.

Interactions containing only project pre-approved material DO NOT require prior clearance by the Director or designate. All other proposed interactions must receive clearance by the Director and/or Project Manager via the CM (communications-team@lists.lsst.org) before the interaction takes place. Images and video publically available on lsst.org may be used by the media without explicit permission from the project, provided the use includes appropriate credits and acknowledgements.

All LSST team members (i.e. anyone who receives LSST funding) must summarize any applicable interaction by sending an email to communications-team@lists.lsst.org.

Acronyms and Definitions of Terms

- Glossary of Abbreviations ([Document-11921](#))
- Glossary of Definitions ([Document-14412](#))
The LSST Media Interaction Policy

1 Purpose

The LSST Media Interaction Policy describes the roles, responsibilities and procedures for handling press releases and media information requests. A principal goal of LSST media interaction is to increase understanding of LSST and its mission; well-coordinated media relations programs help earn public and stakeholder trust and support of the project. The provisions of this policy are intended to ensure public dissemination of timely, accurate, and appropriate information.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Approval and Coordination

Ultimate responsibility for clearance of releasable information to the media rests with the LSST Director. Whenever possible, media interactions should be undertaken by the Director or the LSST Project Manager. As circumstances dictate, they may delegate interactions to individuals with subject area expertise.

The individual designated as responsible for coordinating media interaction is the LSST Communications Manager (CM). He or she is responsible for coordinating and securing approval for advisories, press releases, interviews, and other related media contacts involving LSST. The CM’s responsibilities include media communications concerning the following

a. Announcement of the release of official LSST data, research, positions, and statements;

b. Announcement of activities pertaining to policy, science, research, missions, projects, and partnerships;

c. Announcement of the release of contracts, grants, and other awards of significant public interest, value, or significance;

d. Announcements of activities that may have policy-making implications; and

e. Announcement of official scientific and technical papers authored or co-authored by LSST employees that result or may result in media interest.

2.2 Exceptions and Delegations

The Director may grant exceptions to the provisions of this policy as circumstances warrant. Similarly, the CM may delegate some or all of his or her responsibilities under this policy.

2.3 Staff Responsibilities

All individuals working on the LSST project and receiving compensation from LSST funds are responsible for providing only accurate and appropriate information when interacting with the media regarding their project activities. This includes participation or inclusion in presentations such as audio or visual recordings, films, television programs, exhibits, or other public forums that may be attended by the media.
2.3.1 **Accurate and Appropriate**
- Accurate means quoting approved technical scope, budget, and schedule.
- Appropriate means that LSST team members do not purport to speak for the funding agencies.

2.3.2 **Interactions Requiring Prior Approval**
Interactions containing only project pre-approved materials e.g. from LSST webpages, press releases or brochures DO NOT require prior clearance by the Director or designate. Proposed interactions with the potential to cover information or topics outside of the project pre-approved materials must receive clearance by the Director and/or Project Manager **before** the interaction takes place. Such interactions should be submitted to the CM (communications-team@lists.lsst.org) for coordination.

Notify the CM before responding to media inquiries whenever the inquiries
a. Are of national news interest;

b. Concern regulatory and/or funding actions or issues;

c. Concern controversial issues;

d. Pertain to science or research having known or potential policy implications;

e. Involve the release of scientific or technical papers that may have policy implications or are controversial; or

f. Involve a crisis or a potential crisis situation.

Refer the following to the CM
a. Proposed news conferences, whether for the specialized press or for the general press, radio, or television;

b. Proposed contacts with major news media, radio and television stations, or networks for coverage of news features involving LSST programs or activities; and

c. Official and non-official scientific and technical papers authored or co-authored by LSST team members that may result in media interest. (Publication Board Policy also applies to there LPM-162)

2.3.3 **Guidelines for Media Interactions**

a. Focus on science and fact, not speculation.

b. Limit discussions to matters for which you are responsible and/or of which you have direct knowledge.

c. Be careful not to release controlled information in conversations or in response to questions.

d. Remember: whether in person, on camera, or over the phone, when speaking to a reporter, you represent the entire project.

e. Remember: when speaking to reporters, you are speaking on the record; off-the-record and background interviews almost always result in a story.

f. You are not bound to talk with reporters; should you have any questions, concerns, or doubts, contact the CM.
3 Interactions Reporting

All LSST team members (i.e. anyone who receives LSST funding) must summarize any applicable interaction by sending an email to communications-team@lists.lsst.org. This applies to both written and oral communications. At minimum, an interaction report shall be made after the interaction has occurred. If the nature of the interaction requires approval by the Director and/or Project Manager, the interaction report shall be made before the interaction and amended appropriately after it has occurred.

4 Press Releases and Press Conferences

When the project, through consensus among the Director, Project Manager, other appropriate managers, and project stakeholders, determines that an announcement, press release, or press conference is warranted, the CM initiates the following procedures.

4.1 Press Release

1. CM or appropriate subject matter expert writes draft press release.
   - Press releases must include a standardized funding acknowledgement. Additional funding, if appropriate, should also be acknowledged. A selection of appropriate versions of the acknowledgement is in the project document management system as Document-3607.

2. Director, Project Manager, or their designees approve the release.

3. CM ensures availability to respond to media inquiries of contacts named in the release.

4. CM informs partner institutions’ public information officers (PIOs) two (2) business days before press release issuance.
   - The list of PIOs and their contact information can be found in the Contacts Database.

5. CM informs appropriate NSF and DOE Program Officers and AURA Communications Coordinator of the press release’s impending issuance.

6. CM publishes the press release through specific distribution channels including the AAS press list, Interactions.org, newswire.com, eurekalert.org the lsst.org website, and additional outlets depending on content and circumstances.

7. LSST partner institutions are encouraged to issue local versions of the release. Any editing of the press release/press conference for local distribution must be approved by the CM.

8. CM uploads a copy of the finished release to Collection-55 of the project’s document management system.

4.2 Press Conference

1. CM or appropriate subject matter expert writes talking-points paper.
Talking points must include a standardized funding acknowledgement. Additional funding, if appropriate, should also be acknowledged. A selection of appropriate versions of the acknowledgement is in the project archive as Document-3607.

2. Director, Project Manager, or their designees approve the talking points.

3. CM ensures availability of individuals required to speak at the press conference.

4. CM or designate arranges press conference venue.

5. CM informs partner institutions’ public information officers two (2) business days before the press conference occurs.
   - The list of PIOs and their contact information can be found in the Contacts Database.

6. CM informs appropriate NSF and DOE Program Officers and AURA Communications Coordinator two (5) business days before the press conference occurs.

7. CM announces the press conference through specific distribution channels including the AAS press list, Interactions.org, the lsst.org website, and additional outlets depending on content and circumstances.

8. CM coordinates interactions between media members and project representatives before, during, and after the press conference.

9. CM uploads a copy of the approved talking points to Collection-55 of the project’s document management system.

5 Image Use Policy

LSST encourages the use of resources available on the lsst.org website. Images and video are generally available for use without explicit permission from the project. The project asks that any use include appropriate credits and acknowledgements. Credit information and/or any restrictions on use will be listed with the individual images or videos.