

# HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

## HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT MISSION

The Communications Department's mission is to place Holmes Community College students, staff, programs and facilities before the public. The intent is to accomplish this in a manner that will ensure the institution gains recognition that leads to stronger alliances with key constituencies, alumni, donors, friends and legislators. This will be accomplished in a manner that will ensure a continuing image of the college's stability, quality and worth to the greater community.

## INTRODUCTION

The Holmes Community College Communications Department is the college's public relations agency. The department's main goal is to communicate the message to the intended audience in the most professional, prompt and cost-effective way. In order to enhance the college's reputation and image in the community, the Communications Department is responsible for assuring consistency of image and quality in all college communications. Hence, the Communications Department will assist the college community with the process of providing information, influencing opinion, and promoting understanding of the mission and programs of the college among its many publics, both internal and external.

The Communication Guide is a fluid, living document that will periodically be updated and revised to reflect our evolving programs and procedures so that all Holmes personnel may adequately have a working knowledge of the communications process and appropriately assist in publicizing the great work being accomplished at Holmes Community College.

## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF

### **Steve Diffey**

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Donald E. Phillips Building  
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## MEDIA POLICY

In order to best facilitate consistent, clear and effective media communication, only authorized spokespeople for Holmes Community College are permitted to speak on behalf of the college or authorize others to do so.

Should a member of the media contact a Holmes employee and ask to speak about Holmes Community College or anything pertaining to the manner in which Holmes Community College has, plans to, or currently conducts its business, the employee shall refer him/her to an authorized spokesperson for Holmes Community College. In addition, one may refer such individuals to **[www.holmescc.edu](http://www.holmescc.edu)** for immediate access to public information about the college.

Authorized spokespersons for Holmes Community College are as follows:

**Dr. Jim Haffey** (or any individual designated by him)

President

Holmes Community College

P.O. Box 369

Goodman, MS 39079

(662) 472-9013 phone

(662) 472-9059 fax

[jhaffey@holmescc.edu](mailto:jhaffey@holmescc.edu)

**Steve Diffey** (or any individual designated by him)

District Director of Communications

Associate Athletic Director for External Relations

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Communicating with the media is an important responsibility for Holmes Community College and all of its stakeholders. Employees are to assist those charged with the responsibility of communicating with the media by ensuring that all inquiries from the media are directed to the appropriate people at all time and in all instances.

## **FERPA (Family educational Rights and Privacy act of 1974)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records, to establish the right of a student to inspect and review the records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. An education record, with some exceptions, is any record maintained by the college, or an agent of the college, which is directly related to a student and containing personally identifiable information.

Holmes Community College protects the privacy rights of parents and students as dictated by the 1974 General Education Provisions Act and all subsequent revisions. The Office of Admissions and Records is responsible for the dissemination and proper implementation of the FERPA regulations. Therefore, all inquiries should be referred to the Office of Admissions and Records.

Disclosure of information from a student's education records is strictly limited by this law and by the college policies put in place as part of compliance with the law. Information may be given to a school official who has legitimate educational interest in the records and to some outside agencies as designated by the law. Please refer to the ***Holmes Community College Policy and Procedures Guide*** for more information on FERPA.

Disclosure of information, therefore, is severely limited by the law. A Holmes employee **should not** disclose any information concerning a student other than the following: name, date/place of birth, address, dates of attendance and major field of study. It is Holmes Community College policy that the Director of Admissions and Records will honor a student's written request that his official academic record not be released, or information contained in his record not be disclosed. Please refer to ***Holmes Community College Policy and Procedures Guide*** for more information on privacy of students. Also, printed transcript information should not be released, even to the student, except through the Office of Admissions and Records.

## MEDIA RELATIONS

The Communications Department at Holmes Community College is responsible for bringing the college, its people and events to the attention of the local media and the public of the state of Mississippi and beyond. The department will assist press and other communications media in obtaining complete and adequate coverage of the programs and activities at Holmes.

There are several key factors in the practice of media relations:

- Media needs interesting stories and news. However, the media decides what is newsworthy and what will be printed or broadcast. The media needs time to develop a story idea that interests them.
- Media coverage is not paid advertising. Holmes has little or no control over what the media print or broadcast or when they print or broadcast it.
- The Communications Department plans a coordinated institutional public relations strategy and offers the various media stories or ideas that will be of interest. This is done by targeting stories to each medium's styles or needs and by developing and maintaining good working relationships.
- Channeling all contact with the media through the Communications Department is essential and helps to assure that correct and institutionally approved information is released and made available to the proper sources.
- **Please DO NOT personally/independently contact the media.**

## NEWS RELEASES

The Communications Department distributes news releases to targeted media. Each release may generate stories in media outlets, resulting in countless opportunities for the public to learn from newspapers, television and radio about the many significant events taking place at Holmes. General releases of interest to the Holmes Community College district are made available to all media simultaneously and all media representatives are given equal access to information.

The Communications Department prepares news releases based on information provided by the college client and packages this information for placement. To begin the publicity process, one should submit a request for *News* in the Service Request System in the *MyHolmes* portal.

To ensure a project is getting the attention it deserves, watch for email alerts from the Service Request System which shows that someone in the Communications Department has opened the service request. If other information is available that would help with the release, sent the information (text or photos) to the appropriate person for each campus location. Contact information for responsible staff members:

**Goodman Campus**  
Steve Diffey  
sdiffey@holmescc.edu

**Grenada Campus**  
Katherine Ellard  
kellard@holmescc.edu

**Ridgeland Campus**  
Mary Margaret Busby  
mbusby@holmescc.edu

## TIPS TO GETTING THE BEST PUBLICITY

### 1. Plan ahead!

The Communications Department needs sufficient time to review submitted information, write/edit the release, seek approval, if needed, for changes, schedule photography, if needed, and distribute the publicity to selected media.

### 2. When does the audience need to know the information?

Plan for the release to reach the media three or four weeks before the event. Weekly newspapers have copy deadlines that are usually about five days before dates of publication. In addition, publicity that arrives several weeks before an event gets the opportunity to appear in several issues.

### 3. Remember these six questions.

The rule of thumb for providing info for a press release is to answer these six basic questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?* For all events, include time and date, cost, location, tickets available, registration information, contact numbers, etc. When writing about students, give students' hometown whenever possible. Provide more than enough explanatory copy.

### 4. Include plenty of interesting information.

Whether the goal is to draw an audience for an event or publicize something that has already occurred, people need to take notice so inform the department of any hook or angle to grab interest. More relevant details can create a dramatic release that will attract attention and become a story in print. In addition, good quality photographs are always appreciated by the media. Not all information or photos will be used, but it is better to have more than too little.

### 5. Submit a Request for Publicity.

Log into the MyHolmes portal and click on the *Employee* tab at the top. Click *Submit a Service Request* on the left side of the page, and then click *Service Request System*. Next, click on *Communications and Request Services*. Select either News or Photo or both to enter a service request. Once the request is completed, click on the submit button at the bottom of the page. A release draft may be submitted for Communications to edit; submit it via e-mail with the completed form. Otherwise, be sure all the necessary information has been sent to the department.

### Attention!

Remember...the Communications Department *does not know* about Holmes happenings unless informed by the Holmes employees in charge of or involved in the event!

## **TV COVERAGE**

**Please DO NOT personally/independently contact the media.**

Television news directors look for visually exciting stories that can be quickly comprehended. If there is an upcoming event that may interest television stations, please let the Communications department know so that proper media contact can be initiated that could result in coverage.

Keep in mind the following points:

- All arrangements for interviews or appearances will be handled through the Communications Office.
- The Communications Office can assist in preparing for interviews or appearances with pre-interview strategy as well as accompany one to the interview.
- If contacted by a reporter independently, please refer the reporter to the Communications Office, and inform the Communications Office personnel of the contact and request made.
- Remember, there is really no such thing as speaking “off the record.”
- To avoid having one’s words in print, it is better not to speak in the presence of a reporter or any type of media source.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A public service announcement (PSA) is a 10-, 20-, 30- or 60-second announcement that radio, cable and television stations may broadcast free of charge for non-profit institutions. The Communications department will determine the applicability of one’s information, based on guidelines established for PSAs, and will write and distribute the PSA.

If a Holmes employee has an event that wishes to be considered for a PSA, please indicate as such on the service request submitted through the Service Request System located in the MyHolmes portal. A four weeks’ notice before an event is the minimum for preparation and distribution to meet station deadlines. The station chooses whether or not to run a PSA as well as the time of day it will run.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### **Holmes Community College Web Site ([www.holmescc.edu](http://www.holmescc.edu))**

The Holmes Community College Web Site offers public information that covers all aspects of Holmes Community College. The main page features a column on the left side of the page has the latest news about Holmes. On the right side of the page there is a school calendar. If there is an event or article that may be added to any of these web pages, contact the Communications Department to discuss. Barin von Foregger in the Marketing Department oversees the web and can be reached at [bvforegger@holmescc.edu](mailto:bvforegger@holmescc.edu) or at (601) 605-3365.

### ***MyHolmes***

The *MyHolmes* portal is secure site that provides students, faculty and administrative staff with Intranet and Internet services. Users log on frequently making this site a good place to post announcements and email students and/or faculty. Barin von Foregger in the Marketing Department oversees the portal and can be reached at [bvforegger@holmescc.edu](mailto:bvforegger@holmescc.edu) or at (601) 605-3365.

### ***The Growl***

*The Growl* is the official student newspaper of Holmes and is published during the fall and spring semesters. The student paper is designed to inform the Holmes Community College campuses and their nine-county district about Holmes activities. Also, the paper serves as a workshop or practical laboratory for students interested in news writing, editing, typography and advertising. A student may earn two hours credit working with *The Growl*. Mary Margaret Busby oversees *The Growl* publication and can be reached at [mabusby@holmescc.edu](mailto:mabusby@holmescc.edu) or at (601) 605-3376.

### ***HCC Grid***

*HCC Grid* is Holmes' official blog that includes news posts, a link to *The Growl* student newspaper, and a Job Dashboard for students to find job postings. To check out the blog, visit: <http://blog.holmescc.edu/>. Staff members for *The Growl* student newspaper, along with Public Relations Specialist Mary Margaret Busby ([mabusby@holmescc.edu](mailto:mabusby@holmescc.edu)) and Web Specialist Barin von Foregger ([bvforegger@holmescc.edu](mailto:bvforegger@holmescc.edu)), publish the blog posts/photos. Contact Busby if interested in contributing to the blog. The Job Dashboard is managed by Information Systems Technology Instructor Michael Pawlik ([mpawlik@holmescc.edu](mailto:mpawlik@holmescc.edu)). Contact Pawlik to add jobs to the dashboard.

### ***Horizons***

*Horizons* is primarily a pictorial yearbook of Holmes Community College which captures the activities of its students, faculty, administration and staff. The yearbook is produced by students who earn one hour of credit for their work. Any student interested in working with the yearbook staff is encouraged to participate. Students who have worked on a high school yearbook as well as inexperienced students can participate in an enjoyable activity by joining the *Horizons'* staff. Mary Margaret Busby oversees *Horizons* and can be reached at [mabusby@holmescc.edu](mailto:mabusby@holmescc.edu) or at (601) 605-3376.

### ***PawPrints***

*PawPrints* is a quarterly publication of the Holmes Community College Alumni Association. The publication is designed for the alumni and friends of the college. Katherine Ellard oversees *PawPrints* and can be reached at [kellard@holmescc.edu](mailto:kellard@holmescc.edu) or (662) 472-9134.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

The Communications Department is available to take photos for any Holmes events. Under normal circumstances, schedule photography at least one week in advance of an event. Not every event is suitable for photography. We will help evaluate the need and arrange for appropriate coverage. We also will help select the best photos for all purposes and arrange for prints.

### **Photography Guidelines**

- Although the Communications Department is aware of most campus activities and will have a photographer at most campus events, it is best to contact the Communications Department at least a week prior to an event if any photos, general or specific, need to be taken.
- Shoots will not be scheduled outside of business hours unless they are event-driven or it is necessary to accommodate the schedule of faculty, staff or students who are not on campus during those hours.
- Complete a work order through the Service Request Systems as well as call the Communications Department to schedule all non-event related photography needs.
- All requests for photography must be considered legitimate official college business for institutional publicity purposes.

### **Photo Tips**

- Remember, line-up pictures of people are usually dull so avoid that format if possible. Action photos are always best.
- Photos of students are of interest to newspapers. Students' hometowns should always be identified.
- Try for sharp, high contrast pictures that will reproduce well in print.
- Provide the names and titles of all persons pictured.
- Try to avoid shooting towards the sun or bright light.
- Submit photos digitally in the most original form (camera raw, jpg, tif, or eps) and at the highest resolution.
- Supply digital photos on a CD, memory card or jump drive.
- Do not submit images copied/downloaded from the web. These images are usually not at a high enough resolution quality necessary for print. Some camera phone pictures will reproduce decent pictures, but it is best to use a high resolution digital camera.

## **DIGITAL SIGNAGE**

All locations of Holmes Community College have TVs for public viewing to feature upcoming events at Holmes Community College. Each campus has a contact if a slide needs to be added to the digital signage for an upcoming event by campus or district-wide. At the Ridgeland Campus, Mary Margaret Busby is the contact and requests should be sent to [mbusby@holmescc.edu](mailto:mbusby@holmescc.edu). Cynthia Abel is the contact at the Grenada Campus and requests should be sent to [cabel@holmescc.edu](mailto:cabel@holmescc.edu). Steve Diffey is the contact at the Goodman Campus and requests should be sent to [sdiffey@holmescc.edu](mailto:sdiffey@holmescc.edu). Any help needed with particular TV graphics should be submitted via Service Request System located in the MyHolmes portal by clicking on graphics request. Please do this request at least two week prior to the date of the event.



## **DOG TRACKS**

When the fall and spring semesters are in session, a weekly email is sent at the start of the week to faculty, staff and students which includes events (academic, athletic and community) for the week's events and those upcoming in the near future. All events should be sent to Steve Diffey at [sdiffey@holmescc.edu](mailto:sdiffey@holmescc.edu) by 10 a.m. on the preceding Friday.

## **ONLINE SCHOOL CALENDAR**

An online school calendar feeds the front of the Holmes website at [www.holmescc.edu](http://www.holmescc.edu) and can be viewed at [www.calendarwiz.com/holmescc](http://www.calendarwiz.com/holmescc). Main events from the official school calendar found in the Holmes bulletin are placed on the calendar. Any other events not on this calendar must be added by sending an email to Steve Diffey at [sdiffey@holmescc.edu](mailto:sdiffey@holmescc.edu).

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Any group/organization requesting to start any social media account (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) on behalf of Holmes Community College must first contact Steve Diffey at [sdiffey@holmescc.edu](mailto:sdiffey@holmescc.edu) to inform him of the purpose of the social media account and who the administrator will be for the said account. Only current employees of Holmes Community College can be administrators on the account. If a Holmes employee establishes such a social media account, it is the administrator's responsibility to keep the content fresh and also keep anything not related or inappropriate from appearing on the site.

If the Holmes employee/account administrator discontinues serving as a sponsor of the group, it is the responsibility of this individual to do one of following three options: 1) identify a new administrator of the social media account with the understanding that the new administrator is to create new login/password info, 2) give the account's login/password to the campus VP if no new administrator is named, or 3) delete the account if the group/organization is being dissolved.