

Number: PPD - 0011
Subject: Communication of Information, Advice, and Sworn Testimony by VIMS
Personnel

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) is firmly committed to the concepts of free speech and academic freedom and does not intend to limit the rights of faculty, staff, or students to speak or to present written communications to a wide diversity of audiences. However, anyone presenting professional opinions or interpretations, whether written or oral, public or private, must be careful to separate personal opinions and interpretations from institutional statements. Only the Dean and Director, the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services, the Associate Dean of Academic Studies, and the Director of News and Media Services generally are authorized to “speak for VIMS.” Anyone who anticipates being in a situation where she or he is apt to be called upon to present VIMS position on a topic, must communicate with the Dean and Director, Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services, or the Associate Dean of Academic Studies, as appropriate, to ensure that the information that is to be conveyed is correct and that the nature of the presentation is not apt to be detrimental to the best interests of the Institute. If the VIMS position that is to be communicated has been widely distributed in the public domain and is incidental, as opposed to central, to the presentation, the need to confer with the Dean and Director or other senior administrator is waived.

Individuals called upon to make formal presentations to state or federal agencies generally should confer with the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services well in advance of the presentation. Presentations or testimony before the General Assembly of Virginia can have significant implications to VIMS’s programs and budget and must be cleared by the Dean and Director or Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services. Any communications relating to legal, regulatory, policy, or potentially political issues are part of VIMS’s mandated state services and must be coordinated with the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services and the Dean and Director.

This Policy and Procedure Document does not apply to the normal scientific communication, such as peer-reviewed papers and talks at professional meetings, that are a routine part of scientific activity except that if and when appropriate, the presenter should be sure to indicate that the ideas are those of the individual and may not represent the judgement or position of VIMS.

Again, the intent of this Policy and Procedure Document is not to limit the ability of an individual to speak to any forum but is to ensure that VIMS is properly represented.

See Policy and Procedure Document 0005 concerning Receipt and Acceptance of Summons.

Date: July 1, 2009
Rev.: May 7, 2010
Rev.: July 22, 2015