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# COMMUNICATION POLICY

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR,  
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

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## **1. A GLANCE OF AUCA**

The Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) was founded in 1978. The official opening took place on 15 October 1984 and the university had its definitive operating license via the law N<sup>o</sup> 0056/05 of 03 February 1988, granting AUCA the legal personality as a non-profit making association.

### **1.1 Institution's Identity**

#### **Vision**

Become an international center of academic learning with global impact.

#### **Mission**

Provide Christ-centered wholistic quality education to prepare for service in this world, and in the life to come.

#### **Philosophy**

The Adventist University of Central Africa operates on the basis of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, which holds that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the source of true knowledge. The entrance of sin caused man's alienation from God, therefore the restoration of the relation between man and his God is the main aim of the Christian Education that leads students to discover and understand the truth through critical thinking.

#### **Motto**

Education for Eternity.

### **1.2 Beliefs and Values**

AUCA is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning that nurtures the mental, spiritual, social and physical capacities of its personnel and students. The values of the university are rooted in the Bible and should be seen in the daily activities of the university administrators, workers and students.

Through a process of discernment based on dialogue and reflection, the university designates the following as core beliefs and values of AUCA:

- **Love:** Informed by the example of Jesus Christ, and by the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, AUCA demonstrates a spirit of unity and connectedness with one another through expression, courtesy, hospitality, shared values and loving communication without respect to ethnic, gender or other differences. AUCA extends this value of community by reaching out to neighbors and to members of the larger civil and ecclesial communities.
  
- **Faith:** AUCA is a faith-based institution of higher learning. The faith nurtured in the institution is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and in the 28 beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While other religious traditions and individual beliefs of our personnel and students are respected, the university administration and faculties are expected to integrate a biblical, Seventh-day Adventist faith into learning activities of the students.
  
- **Excellence:** As a faith-based institution of higher learning, AUCA seeks to combine faith with reason in the pursuit of academic excellence. AUCA Senate and Administration call all members of the university community to excel as individuals and as professionals within their respective roles.
  
- **Integrity:** Concerned for the good of the community in this life and life to come, the university commits itself to honesty in all relations with students, faculty, staff and administration. Through the university integrity, workers and students maintain the trust of the surrounding community, public and governmental agencies.
  
- **Respect:** AUCA values and respects the contribution of each member of the university community to the advancement of the mission of AUCA. AUCA encourages and supports each other as colleague working together for the good of the whole institution.
  
- **Compassion & Care:** Inspired by the example of Jesus Christ, AUCA opens its workers and students' hearts to those in physical, spiritual and mental need. AUCA consciously reaches out beyond its boundaries to serve others in need with compassion and mercy.
  
- **Fairness and Justice:** Recognizing the dignity of all persons (students, staff, teachers and administrators) AUCA seeks to avoid any acts of injustice toward

each other and addresses instances of injustice both within and outside of the university community from a stance of informed advocacy. AUCA holds each other accountable and endeavours to practice responsible stewardship of the resources available to us.

## **2. POLICY RATIONALE**

Communication in all its forms has become an imperative tool to help disseminate any institution's philosophy and values, define the business's undertakings and the *raison d'être*, sell and sustain the brand. It is also an important tool by which the sense of belonging is nurtured and enhanced among the students, the staff and going beyond. The Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) is committed to effective communication, creating and building efficient relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. The current policy intends to provide guidelines for AUCA internal and external communications, and outlines roles and responsibilities of involved parties at different levels.

The current Communication Policy also seeks to instil in AUCA community values, practices and importance of communication as a management function, part and parcel to its daily activities. By this, AUCA demonstrates its commitment to a transparent and effective exchange with both internal and external stakeholders.

AUCA values and acknowledges the responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders on issues pertaining to its mandate, development and achievements. Thus, the Office of the Director of Marketing and Communications, with the support of the university leadership, will seek to ensure that all marketing and communication activities are done as per the provisions and procedures stipulated in the current policy.

## **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

The current policy aims at highlighting AUCA's commitment to provide timely and accurate information to its internal public to promote information sharing and build commitment and support for the university's strategic goals; and to its external stakeholders to manage the university's public profile.

All communications shall reflect and contribute to the achievement of the vision and mission of AUCA. They will also contribute to the community outreach activities; help

boost and disseminate research activities. The current policy aims at ensuring consistency in delivered messages.

## **4. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The Policy seeks to provide guidelines for timely, effective and appropriate flow of information: within AUCA and between the University's stakeholders, both internal and external, and partners. The current policy intends to assist the staff of AUCA and students in fulfilling University's goals at all levels.

## **5. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the policy are:

- Ensuring the flow of information within the University in order to promote an efficient and effective management of the University;
- Providing efficient and effective communication mechanism among AUCA management, staff, students and its external stakeholders;
- Providing and promoting the use of appropriate channels of communication;
- Providing a framework for consistent marketing and branding activities directed at enhancing the University's corporate identity;
- To establish mechanism for the management of the communication in time of crisis;

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure effective communication and compliance to the University Communication Policy, the following roles and responsibilities are adopted:

### **6.1. The Vice Chancellor**

The Vice Chancellor is the Spokesperson of the University. He however may delegate this responsibility and designate another spokesperson depending on particular needs and circumstances. These may include the Deputy Vice Chancellors or Directors/Deans and have be the most informed staff/people about the AUCA's vision, mission, objectives, values, challenges and activities.

### **6.2. Deputy Vice Chancellors and Heads of Units**

Deputy Vice Chancellors have a key role to play in ensuring the flow of information, seconded by the Heads of units. The latter include Deans, Heads of Departments and Directors. Thus, they will:

- Regularly communicate with peers, their teams and subordinates in order to ensure relevant information is available, communicated and understood;
- Nurture and maintain two-way channels of communication to ensure feedback is obtained;
- Attend to media inquiries through the Directorate of Marketing and Communication
- Enable, support and encourage teams to communicate about projects, news and updates;
- Ensure compliance with the University communication policy and procedures
- Make sure that their programmes have a communication action plan elaborated in consultation with the Directorate of Marketing and Communication.

### **6.3. Director of Marketing and Communication**

The Director of Marketing and Communication shall serve as the key contact on all communication aspects. He/she is responsible for the co-ordination of all communication activities of the University and all interaction with the media. Thus, he/she will:

- Arrange media interviews, issue media statements and handle media queries;
- Ensure that the Communication Policy is communicated to all staff and therefore adhered to;
- Provide communication advice and counsel to the Vice Chancellor, DVCs, and all Heads of Units in case there is a need to interact with the media;
- Identify communication issues and develop communication strategies;
- Implement and manage communication activities such as campaigns, events, advertising;
- Manage and coordinate the design and production of communication marketing tools: web and print communication materials, editing and production of audio-visuals;
- Manage and coordinate the design and production of digital marketing tools meant for online media;
- Manage the content and coordinate the updating of the university's website;
- Coordinate the editing of articles and supervise the production of the university's electronic newsletter.



#### **6.4. Members of the general Staff**

All staff are duty bound to make known and strive the good image of AUCA. Thus, every employed staff will:

- Ensure effective communication in line with the required standards and ensure this happens in all work undertaken;
- Be informed and have information in order to be as effective as possible and supportive of AUCA's strategic goals.
- Endeavour to use open channels of two-way communications to keep line managers, colleagues and stakeholders informed;
- Act as ambassadors of AUCA.

### **7. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS**

All the communications shall be delivered in regularly and timely. The Communication Policy shall be governed by the following procedures and regulations:

#### **7.1. Internal communication**

Internal communications facilitate and manage the flow of information within the University and to an informed community that shares the same vision of the university. Internal communication involves information about the University's core business and other useful information that staff need in order to perform their duties.

The following tools and techniques may be used for internal communications, although some of them are also used for external communication:

- Staff meetings where the university leadership or heads of units share important information
- Morning devotions and Weeks of prayers;
- Internal Management communiqués and Memos
- University website;
- The Intranet
- E-mails to all staff members (e.g: allstaff@auca.ac.rw)
- Notice Boards; Posters/ePosters and flyers
- University Newsletters;
- Workshops;
- Minutes of the meetings
- Short messages ([Bulk] SMS, WhatsApp texts)

- Email distribution list (the use of a mailing list must be approved by a competent authority)
- Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Instagram, Skype)
- Open days, events and exhibitions
- Academic publications.

## **7.2. External communication**

The main purpose of external communications shall aim at informing AUCA stakeholders and partners of the vision, mission, activities, services and programmes. A number of tools and techniques will be used to foster good and strong relations with stakeholders. These include:

- Engagement meetings
- Marketing campaigns
- Broadcast (traditional) media (Radio, Television and online podcasts)
- Print media - Newspapers
- Outdoor advertisements (Billboards, posters, electronic screen displays etc)
- Conferences & Public speaking
- Website, magazine/newsletters, flyers
- Internet
- Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Instagram, Skype)
- Open days, events and exhibitions
- Academic publications,
- Public/official Ceremonies (e.g. graduation, prize-giving, etc).

### **Note:**

All external communication campaigns shall be organized in collaboration and under the guidance of the Directorate of Marketing and Communication through the office of Vice Chancellor.

## **7.3. Media Relations.**

The Directorate of Marketing and Communications is the University's line of contact with the media. It is mandated with coordinating all University media relations.

- AUCA shall work towards building and maintaining positive relations with media, and keep in touch with the latter;

- The Directorate of Marketing and Communications shall be consulted in regard to responding to media inquiries;
- All media queries must be referred to Director of Marketing and Communication, who will in turn engage with the appropriate line manager (Heads of units, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Vice Chancellor) for appropriate response;
- Media queries should be addressed within at least 48 hours;
- In case inquiries are received after working hours, they will be dealt with the following working day unless there is urgency or instructions to do so;
- Responses to media should be made through the respective channels of media houses. However, the Directorate of Marketing and Communications will have to use other means of communication deemed most appropriate;
- Any information that goes out to the media must be approved by the Vice Chancellor or the designated spokesperson;
- Members of staff and students of AUCA are urged to project a positive image of the University every time they happen to interact with the external public. When contacted by the media, they should always direct them to the Directorate of Marketing and Communications or the Spokesperson of the University.

#### **7.4. Website**

The University's website shall serve as the public's gateway to the university. It shall be updated with most current and relevant information, presented in all kinds of formats like text, audio-visuals, pictures, infographics, and support with premium media plugins to enable it be more dynamic, interactive, responsive and efficient. Thus, the Directorate of Marketing and Communications will ensure the following:

- Full responsibility to manage and approve the content of AUCA website;
- Coordinate and guide Units and Departments in the exercise of providing information meant for web pages;
- The creation of links on the University website and or acceptance of a link of the University website to or from another website shall only be done after the approval of the Director of Marketing and Communication;
- Webmasters/IT support officers shall assist the Directorate of Marketing and Communications on special aspects/needs (coding) whenever a need arises;
- The Director of Marketing and Communications together with Webmasters shall be responsible for regular scan of the website and for advising heads of units to on information that is needed for content updating;

- Each academic department shall designate a focal person to cooperate/collaborate in providing content for their respective AUCA web pages;
- AUCA withholds the rights to use photographs and videos featuring its staff and students whenever deemed fit.

### **7.5. Social Media**

AUCA staff and students shall actively participate in online campaigns geared towards the promotion of the university. The Directorate of Marketing and Communications shall provide minimum training on how to use most common social media platforms to AUCA staff, in order to help bolster the university's online presence.

- Posting and updating content on AUCA social media accounts is the sole responsibility of the Directorate of Marketing and Communications or people who may be appointed/assigned for that purpose;
- All AUCA staff are bound by the duty to embrace new trends in digital era. It is required of them to open accounts in most trending online communication platforms, mainly Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp;
- All AUCA staff shall endeavour to participate in the campaigns to increase AUCA's online presence through retweets, likes and sharing of the published content on university social media accounts;
- AUCA shall not be held liable for any repercussions the employees and students' content may generate;
- Content pertaining to sensitive University information should not be shared with the outside online community. Leaking information such as the University's plans, internal operations and legal matters are prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary actions.

### **7.6. Electronic and online communication**

AUCA recognizes electronic communication (e-mail and website) as an official mode of communication and information sharing, which facilitates effective and efficient official communications. The University wishes to increase its 'green' credentials while maintaining appropriate formality in communication. The burden of paper used and then archived must be reduced.

## **Note**

- The use of physical letters should be discouraged when they can be scanned and sent electronically;
- All staff and students must be assigned a University Email address (corporate email account) by the webmasters;
- All official electronic communications shall use email based on AUCA domain name service (@auca.ac.rw);
- All staff and students are urged to regularly check the University website and their email inboxes for any potential official communication from the University;
- To reply to any official electronic communication, all staff and students must use official University e-mail address;
- AUCA corporate email accounts shall be presented in a simple, easy to remember format, yet most standard and professional one: the full name of the staff with a dot between the first and last name plus AUCA domain (example: [john.mugabo@auca.ac.rw](mailto:john.mugabo@auca.ac.rw));
- Heads of units/departments and directors shall ensure staff in their units comply to the use corporate email account in all things AUCA. The use of private emails when communicating or sharing things related to AUCA in daily work practices shall be discouraged and avoided.
- Anonymous identities/emails are not allowed. Username and origin of e-mail shall be clear and authentic. Staff shall not disguise their identity, whenever they use the University e-mail system;
- AUCA Staff will avoid using abusive or discriminatory language;
- AUCA Staff must not share discriminatory language, insults, images or clips that do the rounds on social media;
- Webmaster shall regularly update mailing lists for ease of disseminating information to all staff.

## **7.7. Communication Forum**

There shall be established a University Communication forum to ensure that all important information is shared with academic and administrative staff of the AUCA. This forum shall be convened monthly for staff or as a need arises, to gather and share updates about the university state of affairs and decide on the strategic information to share with the general public as far as marketing is concerned.

## **8. AUCA CORPORATE IMAGE**

The Directorate of Marketing and Communications is responsible for the corporate image of the University. The office shall ensure branded letterheads are mandatory and observed in all print communications (letters and theirs scans, notices or memos. Thus, the responsibility includes the following:

- The look and feel of the University in general;
- The type of communication material to be used by the University such as the folders, letterheads, staff ID cards, business cards, brochures/flyers, magazine, e-posters/banners, video footages, documentaries etc;
- Use and production of communication materials plus branding aspects: the fonts, the use of logo, implementation of corporate identity etc.

### **8.1. Advertising**

The Directorate of Marketing and Communication is responsible for coordinating all advertisement activities. AUCA logo must be included in all official communications, including presentations at scientific publications, conferences, workshops, seminars. Staff and students should ensure that they do not misuse or misrepresent AUCA logo in form or colour. They also must first seek permission when using AUCA logo in conjunction with other organisations.

### **8.2. Marketing and branding**

AUCA branding shall be directed at building a strong and sustainable image in order to boost visibility, credibility and communicate a consistent message. This shall also serve to influence choices and cement ties for both internal and external publics, build commitment among students, staff, alumni and other key stakeholders, thus nurture the sense of belonging.

The Director of Marketing and Communication shall oversee the promotion and compliance with the University brand specifications and guidelines, and most importantly advise AUCA administration on gaps and on the SWOT aspects.

## **9. PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING MATERIALS**

Communication materials/toolkits include any type of publications such as newsletters, magazines, brochures/pamphlets, audio-visual materials, banners and any other material intended to convey information to the public. The Directorate of Marketing and Communication shall be consulted concerning the procurement and production of communication/branding materials to ensure consistence with the University branding.

## **10. MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION (LANGUAGE)**

English is the language of internal communication. Administrative and academic staff share the responsibility to ensure that our graduates can confidently communicate in English. For external communication, the AUCA shall use either one or more of the official languages outlined in the constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, depending on the target audience.

## **11. EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS**

All Units taking part in fairs and exhibitions on behalf of the AUCA must do so in consultation with the Directorate of Marketing and Communications who is responsible for branding and corporate identity of the University.

Events shall be organized in consultation with the university leadership. The Director of Marketing and Communications shall take full responsibility for media, publicity and branding.

## **12. COMMUNICATING RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS**

Communicating University research will be first and foremost the responsibility of the Directorate of Research, Consultancy and Postgraduate Studies under the guidance of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Directorate must develop mechanisms on how to disseminate research information to internal and external stakeholders. The Directorate must ensure that Intellectual Property is protected before dissemination. However, it must involve the Directorate of Marketing and Communications to ensure that research dissemination is done in compliance with university's branding guidelines.

### **13. CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

A crisis is an unusual situation that calls for prompt reaction and special interventions. Every organization is likely to face a situation of crisis. In this regard, it is an imperative that a committee be formed for that very purpose.

This shall be constituted by the Vice Chancellor, the DVCs, a member of the ADCOM nominated by the Vice Chancellor and the Director of Marketing and Communications.

In time of crisis, the following quick action should be taken:

- The staff or manager in whose area of responsibility the crisis occurs must quickly inform the supervisor, who will in turn inform the Vice Chancellor who will also inform members of ADCOM;
- A Crisis Committee shall sit to plan of action to take in the event of crisis, and decide ways for appropriate handling of the communication, and then release the necessary statements to relevant stakeholders;
- A Crisis Committee shall keep staff members and students informed of the situation using all means/channels of communication to avoid any form of speculations.
- In time of a crisis only the Vice Chancellor shall deliver a media statement or interview, unless s/he decides otherwise.

### **14. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

The Director of Marketing and Communications shall ensure the management and coordination of all AUCA communication activities. The Directorate of Marketing and Communication shall be adequately staffed by competent team, equipment and budget in order to allow consistency in sustaining the brand image of the University.

### **15. POLICY ENFORCEMENT**

AUCA Senior Management will ensure that there are conducive structures and procedures needed to secure effective communication both internally and externally. Synergy is required for all parties (Senior managers, staff members, students) to ensure effective communication and promote the university standards.

The current communication policy and its procedures shall be applicable to all staff members and students.



## **16. MONITORING & EVALUATION**

The Directorate of Marketing and Communication under the supervision of the DVC for Public Relations will:

- Develop strategies to monitor and evaluate the Communication policy;
- Annually monitor the implementation of this policy, review and update it as a need arises;
- Propose mid-term and long-term strategies and interventions.

## **17. REVIEW**

To enhance harmony and performance vis-a-vis evolving demands within a Higher Learning Institution like AUCA, the current policy shall be reviewed every three years to keep pace with emerging global trends in communication.

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