

Number: PPD - 0011
Subject: Communication of Information, Advice, and Sworn Testimony by VIMS
Personnel
Responsible Office: Dean & Director

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 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 & Director, the Associate Dean of Research & Advisory Services (ADRAS), the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA), and the Sr. Director of Communications & Marketing are authorized to “speak for VIMS.” Anyone who anticipates being in a situation where they may be called upon to present VIMS’ position on a topic must communicate with the Dean & Director, ADRAS, or the ADAA, 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 & Director, ADRAS, or ADAA is waived.

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

This PPD 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.

See related PPD-0005 concerning Receipt and Acceptance of Summons.

Effective Date: July 1, 2009
Updates: May 7, 2010
July 22, 2015
Sept. 2023