

Board Policy
Concerning Trustee Communications

1. Purpose: This policy delineates the privileges afforded individual trustees to use Association communications assets and provides guidance to trustees on their official communications with others. Official communications are those that utilize the Association's communications apparatus. The communications apparatus includes but is not limited to the usna.com website, the Association's email system, *Shipmate* and *Wavetops*.

2. General Principles:

- a. The Board exercises its powers as a collegial body, and encourages robust, civil, and mutually respectful discourse among trustees.
- b. Trustees owe duties of care and loyalty to the Association and to its mission, as provided under Maryland law. When acting in an official capacity, trustees communicate with others in a manner that comports with these duties.
- c. Trustees ensure that their official written communications are accurate, complete, and respectful in tone. Trustees do not divulge Board confidences.
- d. Trustees take care not to express their personal opinions as Board positions.
- e. The Association's communications assets are maintained under the day-to-day control of the President and the professional staff of the Association ("management"), who are responsible to ensure the integrity, security, and legal use of those assets.
- f. The Board recognizes that intemperate trustee communications can subject the Association to civil liability and to potentially higher insurance costs.
- g. Trustees whose official communications fall short of the standards expressed in this policy are subject to sanction by the Board.

3. Criteria for Dissemination: The Board has determined that all trustee communications intended for release over the Association's communications apparatus shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Be accurate and complete in all material respects;
- b. Support the mission of the Association;
- c. Use a respectful and professional tone;
- d. Relate to the business of the Board;
- e. Omit personal opinion not delineated as such;
- f. Not divulge Board-confidential material;
- g. Comply with laws; and
- h. Conform to communications infrastructure limitations.

4. Scope and Frequency:

- a. The scope of permissible trustee use of Association communications assets and tools is as set forth below, but is subject as well to the requirement that such communications be on a “not to interfere” basis with the Association’s business:

<i>Trustee Category</i>	<i>Scope of Distribution</i>
Chair	Unlimited
Vice Chair	Unlimited
President	Unlimited
Regional	Members residing in their respective regions
Chapter *	Members in their respective chapters
Class *	Members in their respective class and decade organizations
Board Appointed	As determined by the Chair

- b. The time periods for permissible trustee communications shall be as set forth in the Alumni Association Strategic Communications Plan, which will be posted online for trustees’ information, and specify the “blackout periods” when trustee communications should not be sent due to pressing Association business, e.g., the distribution of *WaveTops*, *SitRep*, or other emails addressed to all alumni, parents, and friends, as well as official Board business and communications.

** In furtherance of their duties as trustees.*

5. Execution with Respect to the Association’s Communications Apparatus:

- a. Trustees wishing to use the Association’s communications apparatus shall submit their proposed communications to the Chair of the Communications Committee (the “Comms Chair”) for review under the criteria specified in this policy. The Comms Chair may delegate as much of the review to management as he or she deems appropriate. Unless the Comms Chair gives specific notice to an originator of the need for a longer review time, reviews under this subparagraph shall be completed, and feedback reported to the originator, within three (3) business days.
- b. If the Comms Chair (or management, to the extent the review has been delegated by the Comms Chair to management), determines that a proposed communication fails to conform to the criteria set forth in this policy (and therefore requires modification), the drafter may accept such determination or, instead, appeal to the Vice Chair of the Board.

- c. The decision of the Vice Chair on such questions shall be subject to further appeal (by either the originator or the Comms Chair) to the Chair of the Board, whose determination shall be final.

6. Standards with Respect to Trustee Communications Generally

- a. Trustees shall ensure that all of their official written communications conform to the criteria set forth in this policy.
- b. Trustees shall not disclose to any other party or make any announcement about formal action taken by the Board until such action has been communicated through official channels.
- c. Only the Chair and the President, and their respective designees, are authorized to speak for the Board and the Association. Trustees shall refer to management all inquiries from the media (to include the news and other forms of mass communication, as well as external organizations).

7. Policies Specific to Regional Trustee Elections:

- a. Candidates for Regional Trustee elections who are not sitting trustees are subject to the Board Policy Concerning Trustee Communications.
- b. The Board Secretary shall communicate campaign communications guidelines to all regional trustee candidates in advance of their election. The guidelines shall lay out the ways in which candidates may communicate to their constituency using the Association's communications apparatus.
- c. Candidates for Regional Trustee elections who are sitting trustees may not advocate for their candidacy outside of the guidelines referenced in 7b.
- d. Regional trustee candidate communications disseminated via the Association's communications apparatus shall include the following header: "This is a campaign message from a candidate for a United States Naval Academy Alumni Association Regional Trustee position. The views expressed in the message are those of the author alone and do not represent an official position of the Alumni Association."
- e. If the Communications Committee Chair is a candidate for a Regional Trustee position, then the Communications Committee Vice Chair shall review all campaign communications in place of the Communications Chair.

- 8. Enforcement:** The Board shall impose upon its members such sanctions as are necessary to ensure compliance with this policy.