

≡≡≡ Congratulations! ≡≡≡ Get Your Event Publicized! ≡≡≡

You've Landed A Media Interview...

As a member of the ESU community, I'm sure you're aware that every time you pick up a local newspaper, watch television, listen to the radio or access the Internet, there's news and oftentimes it involves the ESU campus. For the most part, news about ESU is positive but on occasion, it's not.

Whatever the situation and whatever you may feel (personally) about a reporter, it's important to remember that the press is a significant vehicle for ESU to communicate with its external audiences, enabling us to tell our story and announce our priorities. Successful relationships with the press are no longer a luxury - they are a necessity.

Dealing with the media can be intimidating. It's not easy to answer questions with a microphone or a notebook in your face. To get the best message out requires foresight and thought.

So, when you get that call from a reporter - and you know you will - knowing a few basic tips might help you in your response. We hope this brochure will help you understand the media and make your next encounter successful. Naturally, if our office can assist you in any way, please let us know.

We hope these tips will also increase your level of comfort and have you looking forward to opening your morning paper or turning on the television to catch the news.

Brenda Friday, Interim Director
Office of University Relations, ESU

Whether you want an announcement in the University Bulletin for a student organization fund-raiser or a press release for an event you hope will draw television crews, the place to start is on the University Relations pages of ESU's Web site.

Go to the ESU home page, to the "About" menu, to "University Relations." From there, go the "Publications" page, where you will find a menu of forms from which you can select. You'll find forms to submit for:

Publicity Request or Faculty in the News. These are usually used for press releases or media alerts. Please give us at least two weeks' notice if possible.

Submissions to the University Bulletin/University Calendar. Please give us a week's notice.

Photography Requests. Please give us at least two weeks' notice if possible.

Publications Requests or Graduate Publications Requests. These are for brochures, posters, digital signage, fliers, banners, advertisements and other promotional publications. Some require several weeks' notice, while others need only a week or two depending on our schedule.

Please complete the appropriate form and submit it to the designated email address and we will get back to you regarding scheduling and details on your project.

Tell us your news so we can help you publicize your event! If we don't know what you're doing, we can't help you.



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IN THE Media Spotlight

*Tips For Administrators,
Faculty, Staff and Students
About Media Interviews*



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A member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

Tell The Truth - Never be afraid to say “I don’t know.” Don’t guess at answers and don’t make them up.

Return Calls Promptly - Reporters are on daily deadlines. Today’s news won’t wait for tomorrow.

Don’t Fill Space - Don’t feel like it’s your obligation to keep the interview moving - it’s not.

Be Prepared - Don’t think you can just ad lib through tough interviews. Determine three to five points you want the reporter to know and weave them into your answers, no matter the question. Think of the ten worst questions you could be asked and prepare answers for them.

Use Examples or Anecdotes - Often it’s easier to understand a complicated point with examples, not explanations.

Don’t Lose Your Temper - Don’t take the interview personally. Remember, you’re providing your expertise on a subject that will be on tomorrow morning’s front page.

Don’t Speculate - Deal in facts, not fantasy.

Don’t Give Your Personal Opinion - You represent ESU and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education each time you grant an interview, so your personal opinion has no place in the interview process.

Don’t Be Intimidated - You are the expert, not the reporter. State your points with authority.

Don’t Go Off The Record - Stay on the record. Everything you say is for attribution to you.

Avoid “No Comment” - If you really can’t or don’t want to talk about a subject, it’s better to say something like, “This matter is the subject of litigation and we can’t talk about it.” No comment is a bad habit you should eliminate from your vocabulary.

Avoid Jargon - Get rid of the alphabet soup and speak plainly so the reporter can understand your message clearly.

Be Positive - Make your own points rather than defend against negative comments.

Be Brief - Nothing is more frustrating to a reporter than interviewing someone who takes five minutes to give a 20-second answer. Think about headlines and soundbites.

Rely On Our Office - We’re the professionals who are here to assist you. Call us at (570)422-3532 if we can help.

Delivering Your Message

Project your voice. If you’re at a stationary microphone, don’t lean in and out.

Smile when appropriate and maintain eye contact with the reporter. Remove photogray glasses which may make you look like you’re wearing sunglasses.

Sit still. Don’t swivel or rock in a chair (it can be distracting). Lean forward a bit in your chair to show interest.

Keep your hands away from your face.

Use gestures only if you do naturally.

If standing, keep your hands at your side, not in your pocket or in front of you. Don’t cross your arms over your chest.

Relax. If you’re nervous, take a few deep breaths or try other exercises to help you relax.

Try to keep the “ahs,” uhs,” and “you knows” out of your conversation. Pausing between sentences can help.

It may be the reporter’s story, but you have rights, too.

To make your own tape recording. Just as many reporters now tape conversations for accuracy, you also have the right to do so to be sure you are quoted correctly and not out of context.

To have a university relations person with you. Reporters may not like it, and it shouldn’t happen all the time (especially with routine stories). Be selective.

To protect the privacy of individuals. You can withhold information that is not public, and you must do so in some cases. Don’t be intimidated into discussing private or personnel matters.

To establish ground rules. You can determine the time, place and location; it’s not just the reporter’s choice. You can do this even with a spontaneous interview.

To be quoted accurately. The best way to do this is to speak slowly and clearly and communicate your message. Don’t overload the reporter with information.

After the Interview

You’ve spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the interview and only 15 seconds appeared on the evening news. Or, worse yet, nothing appeared because the story was preempted. Feeling disappointed? Angry? Let down? Don’t be! Consider that 15 seconds to be a positive boost for ESU and the work you do. Even if you weren’t quoted and the story was accurate, consider yourself a winner! Furthermore, your interaction may lead to additional calls from other media outlets.

