Working with the Media

---

THE SCIENCE NEWS CYCLE

Start Here

Your Research
Conclusion: A is correlated with B (p=0.56), given C, assuming D and under E conditions.

...is translated by...

UNIVERSITY PR OFFICE
(YES, YOU HAVE ONE)

For Immediate Release:
Scientists find potential link between A and B
(under certain conditions).

...which is then picked up by...

NEWS WIRE ORGANIZATIONS
A causes B, say scientists.

...who are read by...

THE INTERNETS
Scientists out to kill us again.

...then noticed by...

LOCAL EYEWITNESS NEWS
A killer among us?

...and caught on...

CNN Cable NEWS
We saw it on a Blog!
A causes B all the time
What will this mean for Obama?

...then noticed by...

YOUR GRANDMA
I'm wearing this to ward off "A"...eventually making it to...

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT "A"...can kill you! More at 11...

Mick Kulikowski
Lauren Barker
Tracey Peake
News Services
Today’s Topics

• Why work with media?
• What are reporters looking for?
• How should I prepare for an interview?
• How can I build relationships with media?
• Who should respond?
What is News, Anyway?

• Out of the ordinary: unexpected, controversial, quirky, negative
• Important
• Timely
• Real: kids and wallet
Why Reporters Want to Talk to You

• Expertise
• Research-based information
• Breaking news or controversy
Why You Want to Talk to Reporters

• Reach a larger audience
• Build a mutually beneficial relationship
• Become the go-to expert
• Publicize what’s important to you
• Demonstrate your impact for decision makers
Reporters, in a Few Words

- **Deadline-driven**: pressured to fill space and time
- **Quick studies**: cover many topics
- **Skeptical**: taught to seek confirmation, always
- **Translators**: know how to make complex information understandable
When a Reporter Calls

• Find out what’s needed.
• Set a time to talk.
• Make a referral if you can’t help.
• Ask for advice if there’s a crisis.
Before the Interview

Ask:
• Reporter’s name and media outlet
• Deadline
• Topic
• Interview format and length
• Date story will run
Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

Write down two to three main points you want to make in the interview. Say them out loud.

Support your points:
• Information
• Examples
• Anecdotes
During the Interview

• Stay focused.
• Keep it simple.
• Be honest.
• Avoid “off the record” and “no comment.”
• Once you’ve made your point, stop talking.
Handling Tough Questions

**Bridge:** Move from the question asked to one of your points.

- “The most important thing to remember ...”
- “Another way to look at that ...”
- “The real issue is ...”
- “No, I wouldn’t say that. What I would say is ...”
More on Tough Questions

• Ask the reporter to clarify if a question is unclear.
• Decline to speculate or speak for someone else.
• Always keep your cool.
Zoom Interviews

- Check your background - make sure the setting is appropriate.
- Beware of “floating head effect” if using digital Zoom background.
- Avoid patterned or white clothing and shirts with logos or writing.
- Make sure your environment is quiet.
- Speak clearly.
- Wear pants.

Twitter.com/zoom_us
After the interview

- Provide a business card.
- Confirm when the story is expected to run.
- Never ask to approve the story.
- Be available for follow-up questions.
Relationship Building with Reporters

- Know the outlets and reporters covering your beat. News Services can help.

- Most reporters prefer emails over phone calls.

- “Following up” with a call is a common PR tactic but is almost universally despised by reporters.

- Monitor social media for possible engagement.

- COVID-19 has shrunk the “news hole” for other stories.
Working with University Communications

- We are here to help. Keep us informed.
- Subject-matter experts are often the best people to respond.
- We can help you identify news outlets and reporters.
- Let us know early about new research findings.
- We can help you place Op-Eds.
Thank you for your time!

Tracey Peake
Public Communications Specialist
Tracey_peake@ncsu.edu
919-515-6142

Lauren Barker
Sr. Media Relations Strategist
lauren_barker@ncsu.edu
910-528-2285

Mick Kulikowski
Director of Strategic Communications and Media Relations
mick_kulikowski@ncsu.edu
919-218-5937