

MEDIA TRAINING GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING JOURNALISTS (REPORTERS, BLOGGERS, EDITORS AND PRODUCERS)

Journalists are generally under tight deadlines. While some interviews may be scheduled days or weeks in advance, it is common to receive media requests that need to be filled the same day. It is important to be respectful of these deadlines and respond to requests as promptly as possible.

If you don't feel qualified to speak on a particular topic, suggesting another individual is very helpful to the reporter and our staff.

We want you to have a comfortable experience working with journalists. Keep in mind the following points when approached to be a source for a story.

- Any background, statistics, charts, etc. you can bring to an interview will be appreciated by reporters. Whenever possible, email or give them copies to refer to while writing and editing the story.
- Reporters are impressed when you are enthusiastic and well-spoken about your topic. They will make note of this and are likely to contact you again or welcome pitches on your behalf.
- Reporters, especially broadcast reporters, are usually pressed for time when conducting the interview. Being on time for the interview, having all notes and background information prepared, and giving concise responses are appreciated.
- Reporters can be aggressive in getting the story. If you are not providing the information they need, they may ask you straightforward questions to get the responses they are seeking.
- Most reporters covering WSU will likely have little or no experience in your area of expertise. This also is true of the audience viewing or reading your interview. Refrain from using technical terms and acronyms and keep the information simple.

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TIPS FOR TV AND RADIO

- Look at the reporter, not the camera or a bystander, unless instructed otherwise. If it's a phone interview, have a list of your key points.
- Body language is important. Avoid crossing your arms; gesturing appears more natural and open. Do not rock or swivel in your chair or fiddle with desk objects. This makes you appear nervous.
- If your interview is taped, it's okay to stop and start again or rephrase a comment if it didn't come out the way you intended. The reporter will appreciate having a clean sentence to use.
- Don't ask a television reporter for a copy of the interview. Make arrangements to have a friend or family member record the broadcast if you can't view it when it airs. The Office of Communications also attempts to archive all WSU-related stories.
- Think about the interview setting. Choose a location that represents your topic well. For example, an interview on information technology would best be conducted in a computer lab. Using a background with WSU signage or a logo also is a good choice. The area should be without clutter, free of interruptions and well-lit.
- For television, carefully choose your clothing. Your attire should always be clean and neat. The following are additional suggestions for planning your television-appropriate wardrobe.
 - Avoid wearing white or red. White glows and becomes the most noticeable thing on the TV screen. Red "bleeds" on camera and is distracting.
 - Avoid wearing stripes, polka dots, intricate designs or flashy jewelry. They are hard for a TV camera to pick up on and are distracting.
 - Remove jewelry that moves, makes noise or could hit your microphone.