



EASTERN OREGON
UNIVERSITY

Media Relations Toolkit Faculty and Staff

As faculty and staff members of Eastern Oregon University, you may routinely be asked to participate in interviews or provide comments to journalists and members of the news media.

We have developed some simple guidelines to assist. If you experience any difficulty in dealing with a media request or would like to refer a call to our office, please contact us at 541-962-3740.

University Advancement handles media relations for the university and serves as the primary “point of contact” for local, regional and national media. If you are contacted directly by a media source for an interview, please notify University Advancement so we may offer additional information and accurately track EOU’s media coverage. If your name is requested or offered to the media, we will contact you and help coordinate your interview.

A basic guideline is to feel comfortable with the process. If the journalist wants to speak with you about something outside your expertise, or which concerns a university policy or controversial topic, or requires you to release confidential or sensitive information, please refer them to University Advancement.

Media Relations Pointers

Contact:

- When a reporter contacts you, know that you do not have to respond “on the spot” unless you feel comfortable doing so.
- You are welcome to refer reporters to University Advancement at 541-962-3740 or ua@eou.edu. We will ask the reporter about the story he/she is working on and find out the questions you, in turn, will be asked.
- In the case of radio or television interviews, we will also find out if your comments will be live or recorded.

When:

- We will find out the reporter’s deadline (when do they need a response?) and coordinate a prompt reply. Disregarding a reporter’s request or delaying a return call may be interpreted as avoiding the question, which can damage relationships.

Call Back:

- When participating in an interview, resist pressure to answer any unexpected questions you may be uncomfortable with or to answer the questions all at once if you need time to think. Just make a

note of the questions and tell the reporter you will call back at a specific time (keeping their deadline in mind). Give yourself time to formulate your response and contact University Advancement with any concerns about other questions the journalist may have.

Three & Ten Rule:

- During your interview, pause for three seconds to consider your answer, then summarize your response into key points, answer clearly and precisely and try to keep your answer under 10 seconds. This helps avoid “snippets” from being pulled from your interview and used out of context.

Explain:

- Be prepared to explain your answers. Avoid professional or academic jargon and speak so a general audience can accurately understand your answers.
- Using the “A+1” rule is a good approach: answer the question, then add one point that supports your answer.

Negative Statements:

- Never repeat or include inflammatory statements in your answer. If a reporter characterizes an act as irresponsible or malicious, don’t begin your answer with, “This is not irresponsible or malicious because...” The audience will hear you reinforce the negative statements, even if you’re denying them.

No Comment:

- Avoid using the phrase “no comment” when asked a sensitive or hostile question. It often indicates to the reporter that you are trying to hide something. Instead, explain that you are unable to discuss that particular issue at this time.

No Such Thing as “Off the Record”

- Do not say anything you wouldn’t like to read in print, see on television or hear on the radio. If you are unsure of something, reporters prefer you to admit you do not have that information available and refer them to University Advancement for follow up.

Feel Free to Refer

- Feel free at any time to refer reporters or media representatives to the university spokesperson for comment. This can offer you a professional and courteous exit, and is why the university has identified an office and individual to serve in that position.
- At EOU, the university spokesperson is Tim Seydel, vice president for University Advancement. You may reach Tim Seydel or Vicky Hart at the following numbers:

Tim Seydel Vice President for University Advancement Office phone: 541-962-3740 Direct line: 541-962-3628 Cell phone: 541-910-1723 Email: tseydel@eou.edu	Vicky Hart Public Relations Specialist Office phone: 541-962-3740 Direct line 541-962-3585 Email: vhart@eou.edu
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