

University of Utah Media Protocols Public Relations Office and U News Center

(Updated 3/09)

What is the role of University Public Relations (UPR)?

- To promote the U's institutional priorities and mission
- To foster campus-wide collaborations and consistent messaging to internal and external audiences
- To encourage individual colleges and departments to incorporate the U's vision in their media relations efforts whenever possible
- To offer professional guidance in media strategies, including the development and distribution of media materials
- To work closely with Health Sciences Public Affairs (HSPA) to ensure campus-wide coordination. UPR refers health- and hospital-related media inquiries to HSPA unless the issue impacts the entire university, at which point UPR takes the lead and coordinates with HSPA. In special instances of a high volume of media requests, HSPA and UPR may call on each other to assist.

What resources does University Public Relations offer?

- Assisting with editing of releases, messaging, identifying media lists and organizing media conferences and events.
- Helping with distribution of media releases or pitching story ideas
- Providing candid feedback about what is and what is not a news story. The quality of university news releases coming out of the U is more important than quantity.
- Providing news release guidelines: how to write releases and format in APstyle, how to find that perfect "hook" and headline, etc.
- Providing faculty, staff and student leadership media training
- Encouraging campus-wide coordination of major news announcements and/or news conferences to avoid competing for media time.
- Strategizing ways to publicize a news story to the most appropriate audience(s), and helping to identify those audiences (i.e. traditional and non-traditional media sources, trade publications, targeted mailings, peer institutions)
- Brainstorming ideas for promoting events/organizing news conferences
- Offering ideas for promoting story ideas and/or issuing an op-ed piece.
- Helping tie-in story ideas with similar events taking place on campus

What is the U News Center?

The online U News Center is located on the U's homepage and is controlled by UPR, in the University Marketing and Communications Department. UNews (www.unews.utah.edu) links to informational resources, such as the U's experts list, media uplink information, current and past news releases, Community Forum newsletters, news stories featuring the U, and awards and recognition for U

faculty, staff, and students. To be included on the UNews site, a news release should:

- Have a broad outside audience appeal
- Have an interesting news hook
- Be timely
- Promote the U's institutional priorities
- Follow AP-style format
- Include contacts who are knowledgeable, accessible and willing to speak to the media
- Include photos/visuals, if/when appropriate (along with the appropriate credits and permissions)

What is the Communications Council?

The University Communications Council is made up of public relations, marketing, and communications representatives campus-wide. The council convenes monthly and is chaired by the UPR executive director.

The purpose of the council is to keep a focus on the U's overarching institutional goals and priorities; showcase new programs and faculty experts, share information, expertise and case studies; brainstorm ideas for media events; ensure coordination of campus-wide PR efforts; encourage consistent messaging and branding; and share resources when possible.

For information about joining the council, contact UPR at (801) 585-9244.

Questions to ask before calling the media or writing a release

If/when your dean, department chair or a professor asks you to promote a new program, grant or event, or if you learn of an upcoming study in your department, answer the following before you call the media or write that release:

- What is the "news hook?" Why would a reporter be interested?
- Who is your target audience? Who cares? Why does this story matter?
- What do you hope to accomplish with publicity?
- Is the story unique, timely, and/or related to a national trend?
- In the case of an event, is it more appropriate for the campus calendar and/or newspaper, radio, and TV event calendars?
- Before writing a grant release, ask yourself what is the story behind the funding? What is the potential impact of the funding? Who will benefit? Grants and our donors, while important, are unlikely to get news coverage unless they involve a significant amount or the donors have a unique story or connection to the U.
- What are the best options for your story? A news release? Newspaper ads? "Recognizing U"? Campus calendars? A feature story? Departmental or alumni newsletter(s)? Trade journals? Talk shows?

Feel free to contact UPR to discuss any of these questions before deciding what action to take. Be sure to contact us well in advance of the date you'd like to send out the release (at least two weeks). If you decide to write a release and want UPR assistance, send us a draft release that includes

media contacts, logistics, and quotes or contacts of people who will provide quotes.

Questions to ask before pitching a faculty expert

- Do you know your faculty experts? Do they have a high degree of skill or knowledge in a certain area or two?
- Will the expert be available and accessible when the story breaks?
- Is s/he receptive to giving media interviews?
- Does s/he need media training? Note: UPR offers media training for individuals or small groups
- Is s/he more comfortable with print or on-air interviews?

Media Protocol Checklist

A. Grants

- ❑ Focus should be on the significance of the funding, not the funding itself.
- ❑ If the grant is under \$1 million there needs to be a compelling case for issuing a release.
- ❑ The story should be about the potential impact. Who benefits? Why the U? The donor is important to us, but only part of the story.

B. News releases to major news outlets

- ❑ Must have broad audience appeal - not just campus community or select groups.
- ❑ Is it timely?
- ❑ Does subject of release support U's institutional priorities?
- ❑ Make sure release conforms to AP (Associated Press) style guide and has the U's official logos. For logo guidelines go to:
<http://www.ucomm.utah.edu/logos/index.html>

C. Awards/Recognitions

- ❑ For most awards, submit to "Recognizing U," rather than issue a release, then send the link to the award recipient and dean or chair:
<http://unews.utah.edu/?action=recognizingU>
- ❑ Include notice of awards in department newsletters.
- ❑ Issue a release if award meets the "newsworthy" criteria (i.e. Academy of Sciences, major national recognition, top national or international award in their field, etc).
- ❑ Contact UPR if you need help posting and/or determining best way to recognize the award/recipient.
- ❑ Include photos whenever possible for better coverage/visibility.
- ❑ Submit significant faculty awards to be considered for homepage banner. For criteria, go to: <http://www.ucomm.utah.edu/logos/homepage-banner.html>

D. Events

- ❑ Is the event of interest to broad range of people off campus? If the audience is internal, is it more suitable for a *Daily Utah Chronicle* ad or article, or for the *FYI* faculty newsletter?
- ❑ Check to see if event is suitable to highlight on the “Featuring” column of U’s homepage. For requirements, go to:
<http://www.ucomm.utah.edu/logos/homepage-banner.html>
- ❑ Is the topic unique; is the featured speaker well-known or controversial?
- ❑ Most events are more appropriate for the U’s calendar of events, rather than a release, depending on the subject matter, guest speaker(s) and potential audience. For calendar submissions go to:
<http://www.events.utah.edu/>

Press conferences

- ❑ Contact UPR if you plan to schedule a news conference to avoid competing campus media events or if you’d like help organizing the event.
- ❑ Schedule a press conference only if you have news that is significant and worth a reporter’s time to come to campus.
- ❑ Include great visuals, soundbites and interview opportunities for reporters.
- ❑ Carefully consider the venue, time of day and accessibility for reporters and their equipment.
- ❑ Send an advisory with just enough information to get the media here. Hand out the release with more details at the event; then send to reporters who did not attend, but might be interested.
- ❑ Allow for enough time to organize the media event and notify press -- preferably two weeks.

Contact information:

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