



TIP SHEET: WORKING WITH COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS

Communications offices on college campuses can be excellent resources for helping you raise the visibility of your research, teaching, or publicly engaged humanities work. This document outlines the resources these offices often provide and some key moments to reach out to communications officers.

If your institution does not have a communications office that is available to you, please reach out to NHA staff. We would be happy to support you in media outreach and other efforts to raise the visibility of humanities work in your community.

RESOURCES YOUR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS CAN LIKELY OFFER

- **One-on-one coaching:** Communications officers can help you identify a spectrum of potential media engagements, from writing an op-ed, to radio, print, or television interviews. They can also help identify aspects of your projects that might garner attention from different types of media.
- **Media trainings:** Most communications offices host media trainings for groups of faculty and administrators. These trainings generally cover:
 - Serving as a spokesperson on broad issues related to your expertise;
 - Preparing for interviews with radio, television, or print journalists;
 - Distilling a message and pivoting back to it when necessary.
- **Connections with external press outlets:** Communications officers are the first people reporters contact when they need a quote on a specific subject. Every faculty member is an expert in their field, not just their narrow specialization. Making sure that your communications officers know about your expertise will help them connect you with reporters when an opportunity arises.
- **Gametime preparations:** When you are contacted for an interview, the communications office can help you prepare by providing information on the outlet, the reporter, and the reporter's past work. In many cases, they can even get a list of questions in advance.
- **Internal communications outlets:** In addition to handling relations with external press outlets, campus communications offices generally operate the university's internal press organs, such as newsletters and magazines, which can raise the profile of your work on campus and with administrators and alumni.

WHEN TO REACH OUT TO YOUR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS

- **Anytime!** Reaching out to a communications officer does not require a specific impetus. As a faculty member or dean, you can reach out to build a relationship and tell the communications officers about your research, teaching, and publicly engaged projects. They can be partners in thinking about press outreach for these activities.
- **Far in advance of a planned event.** Advance notice will help your communications officers promote significant events like a public program or the release of a book.
- **When you receive a grant.** Grants offer great media relations opportunities because they provide a third-party endorsement and showcase what is special about you and your institution. Grants also offer the potential for long-term media engagement: showing how the grant is being carried out can garner additional press hits.
- **With your interdisciplinary or collaborative project.** Innovative work between humanities scholars and those in other fields can garner media attention and showcase the broad value of the humanities in addressing society's pressing concerns.
- **With stories** about your work with students. Innovative classes or student involvement in publicly engaged humanities work often get good traction in the media. Students engaged in hands-on work also provide good photo ops, and good images help with pitching stories to the media.