



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Working with Media and the Office of Marketing and Communications

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What is public relations?

- Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.

Public Relations Society of America



What is media relations?

- One part of a PR strategy: A tactic
- Share brand's message or story through earned media
- Build relationships with journalists



It matters because media can:

- Quickly communicate to massive audiences
- Help to spread important messages – both good and bad
- Increase visibility – raising brand awareness & reaching new audiences
- Provide non-biased source of information – ideally
- Keep us accountable



Media can be partners in promoting ETSU's vision, mission and values:

- **Journalists' goal:** Find and report information
- **ETSU's vision:** To improve the quality of life in the region and beyond

Journalists + ETSU experts =
Information and Awareness



How a story becomes a story

- **Reactive:** They contact us.
- **Proactive:** We pitch a story to them.



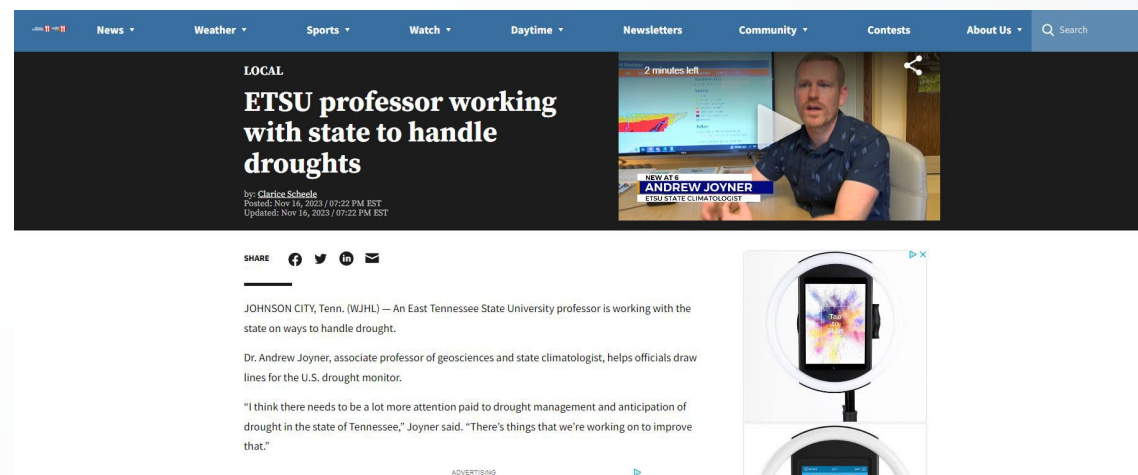
NEWS 5 WCYB NEWS WEATHER FEATURES SPORTS GAME CENTER WATCH

Tennessee reports one of the highest flu rates in the country

by Caleb Perthne | Wed, January 3rd 2024

DR. RANDY WYKOFF
ETSU, DEAN OF COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. (WCYB) — Tennessee right now has one of the highest flu rates in the country, and both Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia have among the highest rates in their respective states.



NEWS 5 WCYB News Weather Sports Watch Daytime Newsletters Community Contests About Us Search

ETSU professor working with state to handle droughts

by Clarice Scheele
Posted: Nov 16, 2023 / 07:22 PM EST
Updated: Nov 16, 2023 / 07:22 PM EST

ANDREW JOYNER
ETSU STATE CLIMATOLOGIST

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. (WJHL) — An East Tennessee State University professor is working with the state on ways to handle drought.

Dr. Andrew Joyner, associate professor of geosciences and state climatologist, helps officials draw lines for the U.S. drought monitor.

"I think there needs to be a lot more attention paid to drought management and anticipation of drought in the state of Tennessee," Joyner said. "There's things that we're working on to improve that."



Pitching a story

What are media looking for in a story?

- Timely
- Impact
- Relevant
- Relatable
- Visual

If you have a story idea, contact your [UMC partnership](#) manager to discuss.



Tips for telling a compelling story

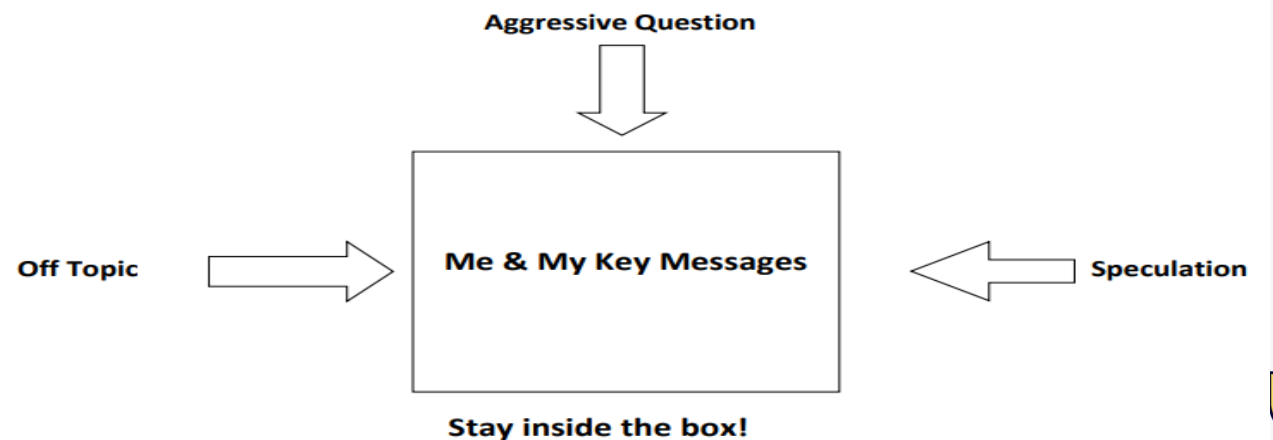
- What is the objective – what do you want to convey in the interview?
- Practice – clear, concise and compelling messages (outline ahead of interview/ key points to convey & emphasize during interview.)
- Showing the audience why it matters.
- Humanizing or putting a face to the story helps hook the audience.
- How does this affect me, my family, my workplace, etc.?
- Is there a call to action or something the audience can do?





Lights, camera, action: Tips for an on-camera interview

- **Timely interviews:** news media deadlines are measured in minutes and seconds, not days.
- Emphasize 2 – 3 key points multiple times during an interview.



Lights, camera, action:

Tips for an on-camera interview

- What to say?
 - Sticking to 2-3 concise points, repeating the main point you want to convey several times in interview.
 - What do you want the audience to remember most – top takeaway.
 - Outcomes and achievements – how does the topic/research/achievement benefit the community and/or viewers?
- How to say it?
 - Speak slowly, avoid acronyms, professional jargon, talking in long soundbites, etc.
 - Always look at the interviewer, not the camera.
- Interviews that are recorded will be edited.
 - Questions from a reporter are not heard on air. A 20-minute interview may result in a 20-second soundbite used during a newscast.
- Avoid saying anything “off the record.” Avoid the phrase “no comment.”



Lights, camera, action:

Tips for an on-camera interview

- Anything to add?
 - Reporters often end interviews asking this. Golden opportunity to repeat the top key message or add one that was missed earlier.
- How to show it?
 - Consider the visuals – they often are the most compelling part of a story.
 - Students performed service hours to build a home for a veteran? Media will want to tag along as the veteran tours the house.
 - New, state-of-the-art equipment and labs for groundbreaking research (media will want video as students/faculty are using it)
 - B-roll is like the paint on a canvas – show the audience how beautiful the work of art is (not just envisioning what it could be by looking at a blank canvas)
- What to wear?
 - Wear solid-colored clothing/ avoid white shirts
 - Avoid large necklaces/accessories. “Less is more.”



Media Interview FAQs

- Will they send questions to me ahead of time?
- Can I review the story before it's published/aired?
- What if they ask something I do not know how to answer?
- How much of what I say will they use?



What if a journalist contacts me or a member of my department directly?

- The decision whether or not to speak to the media is yours!

However, if you are speaking **as a representative of the university**, please keep these important considerations in mind:

- Have I looped in the key stakeholders (UMC, Dean, Provost, etc.)?
- Contact your [UMC partnership manager](#), and we can help navigate the process.



Crisis Communication

- If something has the potential to cause controversy or negative attention within your department, **communicate with leadership and UMC as soon as possible for proactive crisis communication planning.**

*The crisis you have to worry about most is the one you don't see coming.
– Mike Mansfield*



How can UMC help?

- Every college and division has a **UMC partnership manager**. Find them here:
etsu.edu/umc/media.php
- Visit the **ETSU Brand Guide** at etsu.edu/brand for many of the tips, tools, and resources mentioned during this training.



Questions?

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