



MEDIA POLICY

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This policy provides guidelines for faculty, staff and student groups who are contacted by the media or would like to reach out to media.

Media Practices

The news media provides an important communication channel to the community, region, state, and nation. Public awareness and support of the College of Osteopathic Medicine and its programs is enhanced through the maintenance of good working relationships with the media and the public.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine communications office strives to disseminate information in a cooperative and coordinated manner to those people who request assistance and is the point of contact for journalists. Typically, members of the media are asked to contact the office directly, prior to reaching out to faculty, staff, and students. However, sometimes that does not happen.

It is highly recommended that faculty, staff, and students notify the communications office first prior to initiating contact with reporters. The communications office also must be notified prior to inviting members of the media into university buildings. Likewise, when members of the media are seeking comments from, or an interview with, any college faculty, staff, or students, the office should be contacted to assist with arranging the interview or responding to the request. Our office deals with the media on a regular basis and is here to help guide you through the process.

The news media includes journalists from any type of outlet, including but not limited to, newspaper, magazine, radio, broadcast, digital, and internet.

Who to contact when media calls?

College of Osteopathic Medicine

Communications Director: Terri Hughes-Lazzell (hughe260@msu.edu; office: 517.884.3755, cell: 260-403-0766)

What to do if you are contacted by the media?

If you are contacted by the media seeking comment or requesting an interview:

- Contact the communications director immediately or simply refer the reporter to the communications director.
- Be responsive and helpful. Journalists often work under tight deadlines, so a timely response is important.
- Ask who the journalist/outlet is, their contact information, what specifically they would like to discuss, and their timeline/deadline.

What to discuss with the media?

Once the communications office is made aware and an interview has been established:

- Remember you are the subject matter expert in your field. Focus the messages you want to ensure are included in the topic you are discussing. It is important to stick to what you know. The communications director is available to help prepare you for interviews with media training and even practice interviews.
- There may be times when a journalist may ask an off-topic question. You may simply state that it is not your area of expertise, and you can see if there is someone who could help them with that topic.
- Make sure to represent yourself, the College of Osteopathic Medicine, and MSU professionally and responsibly. In some cases, you may be viewed as responding on behalf of the college or university.
 - Be clear that you are providing your personal opinion or insight and not that of the college or university overall. If you are speaking for another organization, be sure to say so and clearly identify who you are representing.
- Also, be sure to let the communications office know of any changes that occur to an agreed-upon interview, including date, time, location, topic or additional interviewees.

What not to discuss with media

University policies and practices take into account Michigan State's status as a public institution of higher education and the state/federal laws governing the release of information. As a result of these laws, employees have limitations in releasing information to protect the rights of students or employees. Therefore, employees should refrain from discussing:

- Legal issues
- Personnel issues
- Questions that involve college or university integrity or are particularly controversial or sensitive
- A campus crisis or emergency

If asked to provide information or a comment on these matters, avoid saying "no comment." Rather, indicate to journalists that you are not the appropriate person to talk with and connect them with the college's director of communications.

- Get the journalist's name and contact information.
- Send an email to the Director of Communications for the College of Osteopathic Medicine, explaining the inquiry and provide the journalist's contact information.
- The Director of Communications will handle the inquiry from there, and if needed, work with University Communications.

Protecting students, employees, and research

As a public institution, MSU is guided by state and federal laws when it comes to the protection of student, faculty and staff information and research. Therefore, journalists, photographers and videographers with cameras or recording devices of any kind can access only public areas in and outside of university buildings.

This includes main lobby areas and hallways. Media is strictly prohibited from accessing private offices, labs, classrooms, etc., in university buildings unless accompanied by the college communications director or University Communications. This particularly includes anatomy or animal research labs/facilities.

If you see a journalist, photographer or videographer in an area of a building that is not considered a public area, immediately contact the communications department or University Communications.