



Tips for Working with the Media

- Talk to your media rep (public relations office) at the university or association where you work.
- You can set the ground rules by saying where the interview will be and for how long
- Confine your comments to those areas that you feel expert in
- Send information to the reporter in advance when possible
- Upfront, say when you are speaking “on the record” or “on background”
- You can record the interview to have it as a document of what was said
- During the interview, ask the reporter to summarize what was said so far
- Ask the reporter how much time or space he/she has to fill. Be clear and simple in explanations.
- “Come to teach” should be your mission as most reporters want to learn
- Speak simply and without jargon
- Dead air is good – don’t rush to fill it
- Don’t assume the reporter will ask the “right” questions – instead, create bridges to talk about what you think is important
- Write op-ed essays and magazine articles (see work of Stephen Pinker) – this is still getting the message out without facing a reporter

An important overall message that emerged from the FORM was: *It is almost always better for an academic researcher to talk to the media than not, despite all fears or arguments to the contrary.*